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## FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

## EASTERN AFFAIRS

### PART XVII

CLOSED  
UNTIL  
1976

JULY TO DECEMBER 1925

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STANZAS TO HIRAT

CHUBURG 1908

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## EASTERN AFFAIRS

### PART XVII

JULY TO DECEMBER 1925

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166 Mr. Jordan No. 159. Tel.	" 6	Bombardment of steamship "Keneh" by Wahabis. Khedivial steamer "Keneh" fired upon by Wahabis while entering Yambo Harbour	146
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168 Sir G. Lloyd No. 391. Tel.	" 10	Bombardment of steamship "Keneh" by Wahabis. Transmits copy telegram to Jeddah asking for information regarding position at Yambo	147
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170 To Mr. Jordan No. 69. Tel.	" 10	Bombardment of steamship "Keneh" by Wahabis. Refers to No. 166. Action of Wahabis not unnatural owing to landing of munitions under false manifest by Khedivial Mail Company, but mild protest should be made	147
171 Mr. Jordan No. 161. Tel.	" 12	Bombardment of steamship "Keneh" by Wahabis. Refers to No. 168. Transmits copy telegram to Cairo stating that Wahabis have been driven off and that port of Yambo is safe	148
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## ERRATA.

Page 68.—" Not printed" should read " See No. 79."  
 " 69.—" Macleay" should read " Lindsay."  
 " 227.—No. 283, before " Consul-General" read " Acting."  
 " 248.—Paragraph 10, " intimidations" read " intimations."  
 " 253.—No. 310, " Consul-General" should read " Acting Consul-General" and all subsequent telegrams from Beirut in this volume.

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**CONFIDENTIAL.**

Further Correspondence respecting Eastern Affairs.

**PART XVII.**

**CHAPTER I.—MOSUL.**

[E 3922/32/65]

No. 1.

*Sir E. Drummond to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 3.)*

Sir,

*League of Nations, Geneva, July 1, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to attach copy of a letter received on the 30th June from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey concerning the situation in the Vilayet of Mosul.

I submitted this communication to the acting president of the Council, and, in accordance with his instructions, I have the honour to request that you will be so good as to communicate to me with the least possible delay any observations on the letter from the Turkish Foreign Minister which you might wish to lay before the members of the Council and the League.

I am informing the Turkish Government that its letter, accompanied by any observations which the British Government may wish to make on it, will be circulated without delay to the members of the Council and of the League.

I have, &c.

ERIC DRUMMOND,  
*Secretary-General.*

Enclosure in No. 1.

*Dr. Rushdi to Sir E. Drummond.*

M. le Secrétaire général,

*Angora, le 23 juin 1925.*

DANS les enquêtes et interrogations auxquelles s'était livrée, dans le vilayet de Mossoul, la commission constituée par le Conseil de la Société des Nations, il avait été constamment affirmé de sa part à la population locale qu'elle était entièrement libre d'exprimer ses désirs sur l'avenir de la province et que la libre expression de sa volonté n'entraînerait pour personne aucune suite funeste ou simplement désagréable. Cela déoulait, d'ailleurs, de l'esprit même du mandat confié par le Conseil à la commission dont le voyage n'aurait pu être dans le cas contraire d'aucune utilité.

Ceux des habitants de Mossoul qui s'étaient sentis rassurés par les affirmations susmentionnées, ainsi que par la nature de la commission d'enquête, avaient manifesté devant celle-ci leur attachement à la mère patrie.

Dans un grand nombre d'endroits, ceux qui avaient de la sorte parlé selon leur conscience, craignant des représailles, avaient prié la commission d'enquête ou celui de ses membres qui avaient fait une enquête dans la localité où il se trouvaient d'assurer qu'ils ne fussent pas punis par les autorités d'occupation pour avoir, malgré la pression officielle exercée sur eux, accompli leur devoir patriotique. Ils avaient, entre autres, demandé à la commission d'intervenir auprès du Conseil pour qu'un délégué de la Société des Nations demeurât en permanence dans la région et veillât à empêcher toute mesure de représailles jusqu'à ce qu'une décision fût prise relativement au sort de Mossoul.

A toutes ces demandes M. le président ou MM. les membres de la commission avait uniformément répondu qu'il était en dehors de leur compétence de prendre des mesures de protection spéciales ou bien encore qu'ils ne pensaient pas qu'il fût nécessaire d'adresser au Conseil une demande dans le genre de celui préconisé par les habitants et que ceux-ci devaient attendre avec calme et patience le règlement qui devait incessamment intervenir.

Malheureusement, la confiance que la commission a de la sorte témoignée envers les autorités d'occupation n'a nullement été justifiée par les événements.

Déjà, pendant le séjour même de la commission, dans le vilayet de Mossoul on molestait, emprisonnait et terrorisait ceux qui osaient manifester leurs sympathies turques ; MM. les commissaires pourraient abondamment témoigner à ce sujet.

Dès le départ de la commission, on commença à prendre des mesures de représailles en grand envers ceux qui s'étaient déclarés en faveur de la Turquie.

En beaucoup d'endroits, on demanda à ceux-ci de revenir sur leurs déclarations antérieures et de signer des requêtes collectives pour demander que leur pays soit rattaché à l'Irak. Ceux qui refusèrent de signer ces papiers furent conduits à Mossoul et à Bagdad pour y être emprisonnés.

La population de la région Dohuk-Amadié, qui le 17 mars dernier, lors du séjour de la commission d'enquête à Dohuk, s'était présentée en masse devant elle pour demander son rattachement à la Turquie et avait, le lendemain, prié M. le Comte Paul Télekéy d'abord et toute la commission ensuite de la garantir contre les représailles des autorités d'occupation, a été quelques semaines après le départ de celle-ci violemment bombardée à plusieurs reprises par l'aviation britannique. De cette façon, la presque totalité des villages habités par les tribus Zedki et Doski a été détruite, un grand nombre de leurs habitants ont été tués, beaucoup d'autres habitants ont été arrêtés et conduits à Mossoul et à Bagdad pour y être emprisonnés et une partie d'entre eux s'est réfugiée dans la zone turque.

En outre, des bandes organisées terrorisent et tuent ceux qui osent se dire partisans de la Turquie.

La liste de ceux qui, depuis le départ de la commission d'enquête, ont été tués soit par les bombes des avions, soit par des bandes de terroristes, ainsi que celle des personnes emprisonnées, serait trop longue à établir et de plus elle serait forcément incomplète.

Je me contenterai pour le moment de citer seulement le cas de Safer Agha, notable de la région susindiquée qui avait témoigné, de son attachement pour la Turquie et a été tué pour cette raison avec ses trois enfants, dont deux garçons et une fille, ainsi que deux domestiques. Safer Agha était en effet un des signataires de la requête collective remise à la commission d'enquête par les chefs de la tribu Doski en date du 7 mars 1925, dans laquelle ceux-ci se plaignaient de l'oppression à laquelle ils se trouvaient soumis et demandaient le maintien de la souveraineté turque. Prévoyant le sort qui l'attendait, Safer Agha déclarait à la fin de la requête que, dès le départ de la commission, la vie des signataires serait sûrement en danger et priait en conséquence celle-ci de prendre les mesures propres à les garantir contre des représailles certaines.

Des faits analogues se passèrent dans la région de Zaho, où le village de Mavéra-i-Sissi fut entièrement détruit.

Dans les premiers jours de juin, plus de 300 réfugiés sont arrivés à Achita en zone turque dans le plus complet dénuement. Le 10 juin dernier, il y avait dans cette seule localité plus de 1,200 réfugiés venus du sud.

Des événements de même nature se renouvellent constamment dans tout le vilayet de Mossoul.

Les personnes de tout âge et de tout sexe qui meurent ainsi sous les bombes des avions de la Puissance occupante ou sont tuées par des bandes des terroristes ou encore qui vont remplir les prisons de Mossoul de Bagdad subissent ce sort parce qu'elles ont cru qu'elles pouvaient manifester librement leurs désirs par-devant une commission d'enquête nommée par le Conseil de la Société des Nations.

Tous ces faits donnent malheureusement raison à ceux qui, lors de l'enquête effectuée par la susdite commission, eurent, malgré leurs désirs intimes, la prudence de ne pas manifester devant elle leur sincère attachement pour la Turquie.

Mon Gouvernement a donc l'honneur de prier le Conseil de la Société des Nations de bien vouloir (1) intervenir auprès de la Puissance occupante afin de faire cesser les représailles précitées et de faire relâcher les détenus en question. Mon Gouvernement prie également le Conseil de bien vouloir (2) envoyer sur place une mission d'enquête qui établira les responsabilités encourues par les autorités d'occupation pour les actes

susindiqués et qui, d'autre part, empêchera par sa présence toutes nouvelles mesures de représailles jusqu'à ce que le sort définitif du vilayet de Mossoul ait été réglé.

En vous priant de bien vouloir porter ce qui précède à la connaissance des membres du Conseil et de l'Assemblée de la Société des Nations et dans l'attente d'une prompte réponse, j'ai, &c.

DR. ROUCHDI.

[E 4029/32/65]

No. 2.

Foreign Office to Sir E. Drummond.

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 10, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st July, regarding the situation in the Vilayet of Mosul, and to inform you that a copy thereof, together with the enclosure, has been forwarded to His Majesty's High Commissioner for Irak for his early observations. Mr. Chamberlain will not fail to address a further communication to you as soon as Sir H. Dobbs's reply is received.

2. In the meantime His Majesty's Government desire to point out that, so far from it being true that any attempts were made by the authorities in Irak to influence the evidence given by witnesses who appeared before the Turco-Irak Frontier Commission, the exact converse is the case. In order to ensure that the inhabitants of the districts visited by the commission might give free expression to their views, and to remove all possible justification for the imputation of intimidation, Government authority in those districts was relaxed to an extent which has proved incompatible with the maintenance of public security. This partial suspension of Government control has had the effect, stimulated by intensive Turkish propaganda, of encouraging lawlessness amongst certain irresponsible tribal elements, and in order that the administration of those districts might be effectively carried out, and to ensure that the orders of the Government were executed, it proved necessary to take punitive action against certain of the tribal chiefs. In the particular instance to which attention is drawn in the letter of the 23rd June from the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, the local authorities reported that certain sections of the Doski tribes have become disaffected as a result of the circulation of Turkish propaganda in the Dohuk-Amadia area. Three tribal chiefs, one of whom was Safar Agha, who had defied the Government authorities, were ordered to report at Dohuk or Amadia ; but as they did not report as instructed, demonstration flights were carried out over the areas occupied by the Doski tribes. On the following day one of the chiefs reported as directed, and Safar Agha was reported to have been murdered. As the third chief did not report, air action was taken against the village in which he resided, and the village was later occupied by ground forces, but the defiant chief had fled.

3. The Council of the League of Nations may rest assured that the action reported above was solely dictated by reasons of public security and administrative necessity. It was certainly not taken, as suggested in the Turkish Minister's letter, because the chiefs in question were known to have expressed pro-Turkish views before the Frontier Commission. Even if these chiefs were interviewed by the commission—and upon this point His Majesty's Government have no information—the Irak authorities would have no means of ascertaining what evidence they gave, since any question by the commission, which might have led them to express a preference for inclusion either in Turkey or in Irak, would doubtless have been put in private, in accordance with the invariable practice of the commission when examining witnesses.

4. Mr. Chamberlain will be obliged if you will be so good as to communicate this letter to the members of the Council.

I am, &c.

V. CAVENDISH-BENTINCK.

## No. 3.

*Mr. Hoare to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 21.)*

(No. 95.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Constantinople, July 20, 1925.*

BAGDAD telegram No. 346 to Colonial Office.

I am communicating contents to Turkish Government.

As regards officer at Keroar, I say that I presume that enquiry will be held and that I shall be informed of result. Essential thing, however, is to remove danger of reprisals, and this can be done by removing Djamil from the neighbourhood of the frontier. As I consider matter urgent, I have not awaited your instructions, and I submit this proposal to the earnest attention of Turkish Government, being convinced that it wishes to co-operate with Irak in avoiding frontier incidents.

If you approve action I should be glad to be able to inform Turkish Government.  
(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 38.)

## No. 4.

*Mr. Hoare to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 21.)*

(No. 96.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Constantinople, July 20, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 95.

I have omitted from semi-official communication mention of Sir H. Dobbs's conviction of Turkish complicity and threat to allow Kurdish chiefs to settle near frontier, as former would merely provoke acrimonious denial, and such a threat, which I could not make without your instructions, should at any rate be kept in reserve until Turks show that they have no intention of restraining Djamil.

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 39.)

[E 4378/2/65]

## No. 5.

*Mr. Hoare to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 27.)*

(No. 565.)

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegrams Nos. 95 and 96 of the 20th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of the note which I have addressed to the Turkish Government urging that immediate steps be taken to restrain Djamil Agha from raiding the Irak frontier.

2. You will observe that, in order to keep the question of this individual's activities as an isolated issue, I omitted the information contained in paragraph 2 of Sir H. Dobbs's telegram No. 346 to the Colonial Office of the 17th July (on which my note was based) regarding the action of Turkish troops in territory south of the Brussels line. I propose to embody it in a separate note within the next day or two.

3. In handing this note to Nusret Bey, I said that I was somewhat uneasy about the situation, and that I earnestly hoped that prompt instructions would be issued to remove the present source of danger, and, to prevent future incidents, I suggested that the officers in charge of the Turkish frontier posts required categorical instructions.

4. After reading the note, Nusret Bey agreed that frontier officers might be interpreting their instructions more in accordance with their own inclinations than with their strict sense. He would at once pass my communication on to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with a covering letter drawing special attention to its contents.

I have, &amp;c.

R. H. HOARE.

Enclosure in No. 5.

*Mr. Hoare to Nusret Bey.*

M. le Délégué,

*Therapia, le 20 juillet 1925.*

ME référant à ma note verbale en date du 15 de ce mois, j'ai l'honneur de prier votre Excellence de vouloir bien informer le Gouvernement turc, d'urgence, que Djamil Agha a récemment attaqué les postes de frontière iraquois à Piraak, Marsis et Shiranis, capturant à Piraak des munitions de fabrique anglaise. Le Haut-Commissaire à Bagdad me signale que les agissements de cet individu dans la région de la frontière et la pression que, d'après les informations fournies par des réfugiés, il exerce sur la population kurde et chrétienne du Goyan, menacent d'éveiller une dangereuse effervescence, surtout parmi les chefs kurdes de cette région se trouvant actuellement en territoire iraquois. Ces informations indiquent, d'ailleurs, l'existence d'une collaboration entre l'officier commandant le poste turc à Keroar et Djamil Agha, qui aurait reçu de lui des munitions turques en échange des munitions anglaises qu'il avait capturées; l'officier en question aurait aussi ordonné à ses commandants d'avant-postes de fournir des aides à Djamil.

2. Je vous prie, en portant le contenu de cette note à l'attention du Gouvernement turc, de signaler qu'à mon avis il n'est pas d'importance immédiate de savoir si ou non l'officier à Keroar a manqué à son devoir. Sans doute le Gouvernement turc conduira une enquête à cet égard et voudra bien m'informer du résultat. Le point capital est d'écartier le danger que la population, convaincue de la vérité de ces allégations, ne se livre à des représailles en territoire turc pour se venger des agressions répétées de Djamil Agha. Le moyen le plus sûr d'atteindre le but indiqué serait évidemment de prendre des mesures immédiates pour l'éloigner de la frontière.

3. Considérant la question urgente, je me permets, sans attendre les instructions de mon Gouvernement, de soumettre cette proposition à la sérieuse attention du Gouvernement de la République dans la persuasion qu'il désire coopérer sincèrement avec les autorités de l'Irak pour éviter des incidents de frontière.

Veuillez agréer, &amp;c.

R. H. HOARE.

## No. 6.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Hoare (Constantinople).*

(No. 105.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Foreign Office, July 28, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 95 of 20th July: Attacks on Irak posts by Jamil Agha's bands.

I approve your action, and you should inform Turkish Government accordingly

[E 4642/32/65]

## No. 7.

*Acting Secretary-General, League of Nations, to Foreign Office.—(Received August 7.)*

Sir,

*Geneva, August 3, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to attach a copy of a letter, dated the 25th July, with its annex, as received, which reached me to-day from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, concerning the situation in the vilayet of Mosul.

In accordance with the procedure already followed regarding the previous communication from the Turkish Government on this subject, I have the honour to request that you will be so good as to send me, with the least possible delay, any observations on this letter which you might wish to lay before the members of the Council and of the League. The correspondence will then be circulated.

I have, &amp;c.

B. ATTOLICO,

*Acting Secretary-General.*

Enclosure in No. 7.

*Dr. Rusdy to Secretary-General, League of Nations.*

M. le Secrétaire général,

Angora, le 25 juillet 1925.

COMME suite à la lettre que j'eus l'honneur de vous faire parvenir le 23 juin de l'année courante au sujet de la répression entreprise par les autorités britanniques en Irak contre ceux des habitants du vilayet de Mossoul qui avaient manifesté auprès de la Commission d'Enquête de leur attachement à la mère-patrie, j'ai l'honneur de vous remettre, ci-joint, la traduction d'une proclamation britannique s'adressant à une région dont les habitants s'étaient, comme je l'avais déclaré dans ma lettre précédente, présentés devant la commission le 17 mars dernier, lors du séjour de celle-ci à Dohuk, et avaient affirmé ouvertement en présence des représentants de la Grande-Bretagne et de l'Irak leur désir d'être rattachés à la Turquie.

En maintenant les demandes formulées dans ma lettre du 23 juin, je vous prie, M. le Secrétaire général, de bien vouloir porter le contenu de ma lettre et de la proclamation y annexée à la connaissance des membres du Conseil et de l'Assemblée de la Société des Nations.

Veuillez agréer, &amp;c.

DR. ROUCHDY.

*Proclamation.*

(Traduction.)

Il est annoncé que le châtiment de Réchid Agha, qui n'a pas obtempéré aux ordres et à l'invitation du Gouvernement, et la destruction par un bombardement aérien du village qu'il habite commencera à partir du 22 mai 1925 à l'aube.

Le Mutessarif du Liva de Mossoul

ABDUL-AZIZ.

L'Inspecteur administratif de Mossoul,  
LLOYD.

[E 4904/2/65]

No. 8.

*Secretary-General, League of Nations, to Foreign Office.—(Received August 19.)*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to attach copy of a telegram, dated the 15th August, which reached me to-day from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey concerning the situation in the neighbourhood of the Brussels provisional boundary line between Turkey and Irak.

In accordance with the procedure already followed regarding previous communications, I have the honour to request that you will be so good as to send me, with the least possible delay, any observations on this telegram which you may wish to lay before the members of Council and of the League of Nations. The correspondence will then be circulated.

I have, &amp;c.

ERIC DRUMMOND.

Enclosure in No. 8.

*Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs to Sir E. Drummond.*

(Télégraphique.)

BRUIT circule avec persistance dans régions limitrophes ligne conventionnelle Bruxelles qu'au sud cette ligne, des bandes volontaires sont formées par une vaste et active propagande et qu'à l'aide ces formations, on tenterait ouvertement ou clandestinement des troubles à l'intérieur du territoire turc, ou procéder à des agressions qui, au besoin, seraient appuyées et protégées par troupes régulières. Juste au moment où Gouvernement turc, inquiété par ces informations, cherchait à en contrôler véracité et étendue, quatre aéropatrons anglais franchirent ligne conventionnelle 11 août courant et survolèrent Mergni, situé au nord de cette ligne, et au sud vers le Beit-ul-Chebab. Cet acte a été protesté auprès du Gouvernement britannique. Gouvernement République turque a l'honneur d'y attirer attention Société des Nations.—TEWFIK ROUCHDY.

[E 4797/32/65]

No. 9.

*Foreign Office to Secretary-General, League of Nations.*

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 24, 1925.

WITH reference to your letter of the 14th July and previous correspondence regarding the situation in the Vilayet of Mosul, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to inform you that His Majesty's Government, having received a report on the subject from His Majesty's High Commissioner for Irak, desire to offer the following further observations upon the letter from his Excellency the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs of the 23rd June.

2. The specific allegations of the Turkish Foreign Minister are taken in order.

(a.) That during the stay of the League of Nations Commission in the Vilayet of Mosul persons venturing to express pro-Turkish sympathies were molested, imprisoned or terrorised.

This presumably refers to the incident at Mosul when twelve persons were arrested for planning an armed pro-Turkish demonstration. The tension in Mosul town at that time was so great that many Christian families were abandoning their houses and leaving for Bagdad. It did not take the commission long to discover that the pro-Turkish party, while making every endeavour to provoke demonstrations and disorder, made a practice of representing every normal administrative act required for the preservation of order as a case of repression and intimidation. The following extract from an official letter dated the 16th February, 1925, from Count Pourtales, president of the Kirkuk Sub-Commission, to the British liaison officer, is an eloquent testimony to the correctness of the attitude adopted by the local authorities:—

"Je me plaît à reconnaître l'efficacité des mesures prises par l'administration de la ville de Kirkuk à l'effet d'empêcher toutes manifestations dans la rue, dans un sens comme dans l'autre. J'ai été heureux de constater également comment dans cette ville toute liberté a été donnée à quiconque de me faire connaître son opinion."

It should be added that in the Mosul Vilayet the town of Kirkuk, with its predominantly Turkoman population, was that in which the most violent pro-Turkish feelings might have been expected to manifest themselves.

(b.) That immediately after the departure of the commission wholesale reprisals began against those who declared for Turkey.

The questions addressed by the commissioners to the witnesses who appeared before them were put in secret, and the Irak Government therefore has no means of knowing what persons expressed pro-Turkish feelings, except in the case of one or two who demonstrated those feelings openly, and, by inference, in the case of others who, after the departure of the commission, put themselves in touch with the Turkish authorities over the border and then returned to create disorder. The allegation of wholesale reprisals is devoid of any foundation; there have been no reprisals whatever on anybody.

(c.) That in many places persons who had declared in favour of Turkey were pressed to sign collective manifestos going back on their previous declarations, and that those who refused to do so were imprisoned in Bagdad or Mosul.

There is no foundation whatever for this allegation. Such collective manifestos, to have any value, would obviously be intended for despatch to the commission or to the League of Nations. His Majesty's Government venture to suggest that enquiries should be made as to whether the commission or the League did receive any such manifestos after the departure of the commission. In any case the secrecy of the enquiry addressed to each witness by the commission would render any such proceeding impossible (see answer to (b) above).

(d.) That the population of the Dohuk-Amadia region were, several weeks after the departure of the commission, repeatedly bombarded by the British Air Force as a reprisal for pro-Turkish demonstrations at Dohuk, and that nearly all the Zodki and Doski villages were destroyed, many inhabitants being killed and arrested.

This complaint appears to refer to a one-day operation on the 22nd May. The actual facts are as follows: On the occasion of the visit of the commission to Dohuk a number of Doski aghas, with personal grievances against the kaimakam, made a pro-Turkish demonstration. This scene was led by Zafar Agha, an exceptionally bad character and the murderer of the last chief of the Yazidis, of whose wife he was the paramour. Immediately after the departure of the commission information was received that a suggestion had been made to the Doski aghas from beyond the Turkish border that they would be punished for this episode, and that their best defence was organised rebellion, which, they were assured, Turkish soldiers in tribal clothing would be available to assist. Indeed, three Doski aghas—Zafar, Shafik and Rashid—were shortly after found to be corresponding with other potential malcontents with a view to combined defiance of the Irak Government. Propaganda regarding the approach of large bodies of Turkish troops became intense; on the 8th April a police patrol was waylaid and disarmed; the Government mudir was defied and insulted; in the middle of April Zafar Agha returned from a visit to Jezireh with ammunition for distribution, and cut the telegraph wire. All possible forbearance was exercised and every means taken to give these three ringleaders the opportunity to come in to the Irak Government, and so avoid punitive measures, which might be open to misrepresentation. Finally, when further delay seemed likely to lead to serious developments, the three ringleaders were summoned to Dohuk. On their refusal, warnings were dropped on five villages to the effect that, in view of the refusal of their aghas to come in, these five villages were liable to be attacked. On the 20th May Shafik Agha submitted at Dohuk, and news was received that Zafar Agha had been murdered by a fellow tribesman. Only one village, Hajjawa, belonging to Rashid Agha and already deserted, was attacked from the air and destroyed by ground troops. Rifle fines were inflicted on the other four villages. Details of the murder of Zafar Agha have never been received, but it appears to have been committed by his domestic enemies, and the implication in the Turkish note that the Irak Government was connected with the incident is devoid of any foundation whatever. As regards refugees, it is not improbable that the villagers of the guilty aghas took temporary refuge across the border on the approach of the troops.

(e.) That organised bands are terrorising and killing such persons as declare themselves partisans of Turkey.

No evidence whatever is brought forward in support of this allegation, which is without any shadow of foundation.

(f.) That persons killed or imprisoned since the departure of the commission are innumerable.

No person has been imprisoned for expressing pro-Turkish sentiments to the commission. Eight men at Dohuk were prosecuted for refusing to obey a legitimate order (given at the request of the president of the commission) to disperse, when the attitude of the crowd had become menacing and alarmed the president and the commission. The remarks made above regarding the secrecy of the commission's interrogation of witnesses also apply to this allegation. Even in the restricted military operations described, no casualties on human beings whatever have been inflicted, owing to strict observance of the rule of giving notice before air action is taken. The case of Zafar Agha is disposed of in the answer to (d) above.

(g.) That the village of Mavo'ra-i-Sissi, in the Zakho district, was entirely destroyed.

No village of this name is known. If Marsis is intended, the facts are as follows:—

A police patrol from Zakho spent the night of the 3rd-4th May at Marsis, the village of Jamil Agha Sindi. The following morning, soon after leaving the village, the patrol was ambushed by Jamil Agha, losing the inspector in command and seven men killed and two wounded. The survivors, who reached Shiranis Islam, were again attacked that night by Jamil Agha, but with local assistance beat him off. Immediate punitive air action was therefore taken against the deserted villages of Marsis and

Bazingera, belonging to Jamil Agha, who had at once crossed the border to Turkey after this outrage. After a delay to give Jamil an opportunity to come in, the same two villages and two others belonging to him were again bombed on the 18th May, and subsequently occupied by ground troops, but not damaged in any way by the troops. The situation remained quiet until early July, when Jamil Agha became active, and continued to attack the frontier posts almost nightly.

I am, &c.

THOMAS SPRING-RICE

[E 4928/2/65]

No. 10.

Foreign Office to Secretary-General, League of Nations.

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 27, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to request that you will be so good as to lay the following matter, relative to the situation on the Turco-Irak frontier, before the members of the Council of the League of Nations.

2. The villages of Sinat and Dershish, south-west of Av-a-Guzi and north of Pirakh, were visited during the month of June by Turkish troops, and their Christian inhabitants were expelled. These villages lie several miles to the south of the provisional frontier-line laid down by the Council at Brussels in October last; and His Majesty's Government therefore feel bound to protest to the Council against this violation of the agreement accepted by both the Turkish and the British Governments.

3. This matter has already been brought to the notice of the Turkish Government by His Majesty's Embassy at Constantinople, who have asked that instructions may be given to the Turkish authorities in those regions to respect the provisional frontier.

I am, &c.

THOMAS SPRING-RICE

No. 11.

Sir R. Lindsay (No. 44) to High Commissioner, Bagdad.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received August 28.)

(No. 112.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Constantinople, August 27, 1925.

PRESS telegrams from Angora state that Armenian incursion into Turkish territory from south of line by an immense crowd included regular military forces. Turkish Government have protested to League of Nations and taken measures for protection of frontier.

[E 4911/32/65]

No. 12.

Foreign Office to Secretary-General, League of Nations.

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 28, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd August transmitting a copy of a letter dated the 25th July, with its annex, from the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs relative to the situation in the Vilayet of Mosul, and requesting any observations thereon which His Majesty's Government may wish to lay before the members of the Council and of the League.

2. The circumstances in which the Irak authorities were compelled to take certain punitive action in the Dohuk-Amadia region are fully set forth in Foreign Office letter of the 24th August under heading (d) and also in Foreign Office letter of the 10th July. I am to invite particular attention to the fact that the Chief Rashid Agha, to whom reference is made in the proclamation forwarded to you by the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, is the "third chief" referred to at the end of paragraph 2 in the Foreign Office letter of the 10th July, that the action taken against him was dictated solely by reasons of public security and administrative necessity and that it was in no way connected with the views which Rashid Agha may have expressed before the Frontier Commission. A warning, such as that enclosed in the note from the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, is usually issued in advance of any air action in order to enable innocent persons to move to a place of safety.

I am, &c.

THOMAS SPRING-RICE

[E 5145/2/65]

No. 13.

*Secretary-General, League of Nations, to Foreign Office.—(Received August 29.)*

Sir,

Geneva, August 27, 1925.  
I HAVE the honour to attach copy of a telegram, dated the 26th August, which reached me to-day from the Minister for Foreign Affairs (*ad interim*) of the Republic of Turkey concerning incidents in the neighbourhood of the Brussels provisional boundary line between Turkey and Irak.

In accordance with the procedure already followed regarding previous communications, I have the honour to request that you will be so good as to send me, with the least possible delay, any observations on this telegram which you might wish to lay before the members of the Council and of the League. The correspondence will then be circulated.

I have, &c.  
ERIC DRUMMOND.

Enclosure in No. 13.

*Turkish Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs to Sir E. Drummond.*

(Télégraphique.)

PAR télégramme du 15 août 1925, Ministre Affaires étrangères République turque avait eu l'honneur porter connaissance Société des Nations préparatifs qui étaient faits dans territoires se trouvant sous occupation britannique contre territoire situé nord ligne provisoire Bruxelles. D'après informations officielles reçues de frontière, un groupe environ 500 individus a attaqué, 24 août matin, notre poste militaire près Chapatan au nord ligne provisoire; parmi agresseurs présence militaires exercés en tenue khaki et mouvements militaires ordonnés ont été constatés. Une action pareille de la part Angleterre provenant territoires occupés par elle pouvant tendre création un fait accompli quelconque, protestons catégoriquement dès à présent contre telle éventualité. Par ailleurs, cette action visant de fait exercer pression sur examen et décision Société Nations, y attirons attention Conseil Société Nations.—Ministre Affaires étrangères *ad interim*, MAHMOUD ESSAD.

[E 5164/32/65]

No. 14.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 31.)*

(No. 660.)

Sir,

Therapia, August 25, 1925.  
ON returning to Constantinople from leave, and on reading through the despatches and Turkish Government notes about Irak which Mr. Hoare has forwarded to you, I could not help feeling that the prospects here of a quiet solution of the frontier question are rather unsatisfactory, and I was glad therefore to learn that the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs on his way to Geneva would spend a couple of nights in town.

2. I saw Tewfik Rushdi Bey on the 23rd instant, and after exchanging expressions of satisfaction at the meeting with yourself that is about to take place at Geneva, I told his Excellency that I felt disquieted at the situation I found prevailing here in regard to the Irak frontier question. I had hoped that every effort would be made to keep public opinion in Turkey quiet on the subject in order that if a decision was rendered unfavourable to Turkish aspirations its execution might not have been rendered difficult by the undue encouragement meanwhile of unjustified hopes. I had made representations in this sense to his Excellency in the spring of this year, but now that I was back in Turkey I greatly regretted to observe nothing satisfactory in the outlook. The local authorities on the frontier were not behaving loyally; the press was working itself up into a state of excitement; the Government showed no desire to restrain either; and to judge by its notes to this Embassy seemed to be approving the course which events were taking.

3. There ensued a lengthy though quite friendly discussion of details which I fear was inconclusive, in the course of which Tewfik Rushdi Bey maintained that the press was showing remarkable restraint, the Government was encouraging the press in this attitude, and the local authorities, in accordance with the stringent instructions they had received, were behaving most correctly. He said that the question was indeed of vital importance for Turkey. His Government earnestly desired peace, and to ensure it must have security; and he feared that a decision on the lines of the Irak League Commission's recommendations would leave a frontier uncovered to such an extent as to remove all sense of security. There were, he said, cases where the feelings of a people might be too strong to be repressed. To this I answered that while it might possibly be as he said, in some cases, it was the function of the Government to consider very coolly beforehand how exceedingly grave the consequences might be of giving way to feelings. I should say, however, that the conversation ended on a note, struck by his Excellency, of the most complete and to me the most astounding optimism. He was quite convinced, he said, that the Council would be able to evolve a decision of the most perfect justice, which would afford complete satisfaction to both parties, and would remove out of the path the last stumbling-block at the feet of international friendship. His Excellency is indeed of an ebullient temperament, and I am unable to decide, nor does it much matter, whether his optimism is sincere or otherwise.

4. The French Ambassador with whom I have also had a conversation, has also noticed the effervescence in opinion here, and anticipates that we are entering on a period of considerable anxiety. He had thought the Turks, with their large concentrations of troops in the eastern vilayets, were meditating an actual *coup de main* against Mosul; he has abandoned this idea, but he thinks they probably mean to carry on a kind of guerilla warfare of bands and "chettes," which will extend over the whole frontier from Alexandretta to the confines of Persia. It will be accompanied by an intensive propaganda, extending throughout Irak and Syria, against the whole principle of the mandatory system. The French, he thinks, will have to pay for the closeness of their relations with His Majesty's Government, and already all his pending questions with the Turks are at an absolute dead stop. He is convinced, as I am too, that in all this the Turks are and will be instigated and encouraged by the Russian Government, and perhaps too he thinks (though I doubt it) by the German. He does not think that the Turkish Government will push matters to the point of war. They are still too anxious for peaceful reconstruction of their own country; but the danger will be considerable in any case, and will be greatly aggravated if some exterior complication should supervene—if, for instance, the Powers were to be seriously engaged in difficulties in China.

5. I venture to think that M. Sarraut's views, as reported by me above, are in the main correct, and that we may within the next few months have serious grounds for anxiety in our relations with Turkey. The report of the League's Frontier Commission is stuffed full of phrases and dicta which for years to come will afford ammunition to Turkish irredentists. The Government of Angora, no less than weak Governments of Europe, is anxious for its own purposes and popularity to be able to point to some striking success in the field of foreign policy, and in the pursuit of it in Irak, Turks will be constitutionally inclined to push matters to the very edge of the precipice. At the same time the elements making for an eventually peaceful issue are, in my judgment, preponderating. With all their military repressions and independence tribunals, I do not feel that the Turkish Government is yet entirely happy as to its internal situation. They seem to be to be as keen now as they were two months ago, or even more keen, on the development of their material resources, and as willing to make vast sacrifices for this purpose. Politically, they are undoubtedly, in a matter of this sort, considerably swayed by Russian advice; but, at the same time, balanced as they are between Russia on the north, and the Western Powers on the south, they are most anxious not to be thrown or to throw themselves into the arms of the former; for even Tewfik Rushdi Bey, who professes almost openly a sort of vapid sentimental affection for Russia, has no misapprehensions as to what would follow from a fall to the northern side of the fence. Finally, though I have talked above of effervescences and excitements, I feel bound to say that though they exist they have not yet been carried to exorbitant lengths. I do not now feel that either the press, the Government or the local authorities on the frontier have shown as yet any intention of "going all out."

I have, &amp;c.

R. C. LINDSAY.

[E 5189/2/65]

No. 15.

*Ahmed Ferid Bey to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 31.)**Ambassade de la République turque, Londres,  
le 31 août 1925.*

M. le Ministre,

COMME suite à ma note du 17 courant, j'ai l'honneur de porter à la connaissance de votre Excellence que, d'après les informations officielles parvenues à mon Gouvernement de la zone frontière, une force armée évaluée à 500 hommes a attaqué, dans la matinée du 24 courant, nos postes militaires aux environs de Chapatan au nord de la ligne conventionnelle de Bruxelles. Parmi les agresseurs, on remarquait des hommes exercés, habillés en khaki, effectuant des opérations militaires régulières.

Mon Gouvernement me charge de protester formellement auprès du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique contre cette agression, qui peut avoir comme but la création de faits accomplis.

Veuillez agréer, &c.  
A. FERID.

No. 16.

*Consul London to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 2.)*

(No. 274.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Chamberlain:—

"First Council discussion on Mosul will be taken to-morrow. Question will then be referred to committee of Swedish, Spanish and Uruguayan members. It seems unlikely we shall get decision in less than a fortnight. Secretary of State for the Colonies will stay here as long as necessary."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 17.

*Consul London to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 4.)*

(No. 281.)

(Telegraphic.) En clair.

Geneva, September 3, 1925.

FOLLOWING for Koppel from Steward for immediate use:—

"Amery then presented British case regarding Mosul. He dealt with question of legal sovereignty, pointing out that this would pass automatically the moment Council gave its decision. After complimenting Boundary Commission on impartial and painstaking conduct of its enquiry, and local Irak authorities on fulfilment of their difficult duties, he said that practical experience of commission in contact with local conditions had led to rejection of plebiscite idea. Turning to commission's conclusions, he pointed out they implied question whether British Government were prepared to undertake towards League conditions subject to which commission recommended that whole disputed area up to Brussels line should remain part of Irak. Neither British nor Irak Government could be expected to accept without reservation commission's views regarding stability of Irak State, or suggestion that predominant motive of majority of population of disputed area in desiring attachment to Irak was desire for effective control under mandate. Conception of mandate in its original form was not popular among people of Irak, who regarded it as implying tutelage inconsistent with their existing measure of independence. Dealing with commission's suggested period of twenty-five years during which Irak would require advice and support, Amery pointed out that this figure was obviously tentative, and precise period during which State could consolidate its position and develop its resources could not be definitely laid down beforehand. British Government in accepting responsibility towards League for continuance of stable and progressive government in Irak were in no sense departing from their declared policy of using their good offices to secure

admission of Irak to League membership as soon as possible. Subject to these explanations, British Government were prepared before expiration in 1928 of present treaty, which was formally approved last year by Council, to give effect to provision contained in protocol of that treaty by replacing it by treaty of longer duration, which would safeguard throughout Kingdom of Irak those conditions of stable government and reasonable consideration for local interests subject to which commissioners considered that territory south of Brussels line should continue in its present union with Irak, and to continue their responsibility towards League in this respect until such time within limit suggested by commissioners as Council were clearly convinced that those conditions of stability which commissioners postulated were definitely and permanently secured. Amery added that British Government, speaking not only for themselves, but for Parliament and Government of Irak, from whose Prime Minister he had in last twenty-four hours received following resolution: 'Irak nation, represented by Chamber of Députés, declares its strong friendship for Great Britain, and expresses its desire to continue in alliance with her after expiry of present treaty.'

"As regarded second condition concerning Kurds, Amery said British and Irak Governments gladly gave assurance that existing system, which to large extent carried out commission's recommendations, should be continued and made more effective. Dealing with suggestion that Council might contemplate partition of territory south of Brussels line possibly along line of Lesser Zab, Amery said it was obvious from report itself that suggestion was unjustified by any consideration of merits of case as far as disputed territory was concerned. Commissioners had shown that any line south of Brussels line was unfair economically and strategically, and would involve maximum hardship and injustice. It would exclude from Irak Arab centre of Mosul and bulk of Christian population, whilst still excluding from Turkey majority of Turkish element of Mosul Vilayet. Any frontier depriving Irak of rich revenue-producing districts and best recruiting areas and leaving it weakened with strategically indefensible frontier would impose upon Irak task entirely beyond its capacity, and for which League could not expect British Government or British taxpayers to assume responsibility. Such partition might create condition of affairs under which British Government would feel it impossible to continue their support. It would inevitably result in panic among Christian population and others identified with Irak, and would fatally undermine whole moral basis on which relationship of Irak to British Government and League depended. He hoped he had made clear without exaggeration, but with full sense of seriousness of issue, grave responsibility which Council would assume by deciding upon partition. Amery also pointed out incorrectness of Turkish claim that subject in dispute was merely future of Mosul Vilayet, and reiterated strategic arguments for frontier along inaccessible mountain chain. He summarised argument for frontier enabling Assyrians to be settled within Irak, pointing out that Brussels line would render this impossible. Dealing with suggestion that League should appoint representative to supervise protection of minorities, Amery recalled similar proposals which had been previously rejected by League. In any case, he saw no reason to limit proposal to disputed area, but added that if Council wished to try experiment British Government would accept proposal for whole of Irak, provided Turkish Government similarly accepted it for whole of Turkey, and that suggested representative would merely act as observer. In conclusion Amery reiterated that it was policy of British Government to accept extended responsibility for Irak, and emphasised immense importance of final solution being reached during present session of Council which would be of nature to secure lasting peace."

No. 18.

*Consul London to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 4.)*

(No. 282.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State:—

Geneva, September 3, 1925.

"For general sense of statement by Secretary of State for the Colonies in presenting to Council British case regarding Irak frontier see summary already telegraphed by Steward to News Department for issue by wireless. In my opinion Mr. Amery's admirable speech met with a most favourable reception."

"Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs in a long statement this afternoon made an ingenious attempt to misrepresent commission's report as generally favourable to Turkish claims, quoting various passages apart from their context and introducing lengthy extracts from reports by Turkish assessor to Turkish Government. He made great play with conclusions of commission regarding legal sovereignty, and rebuked commission for exceeding its functions by introducing issue of duration of mandate.

"To-morrow morning Turkish and British delegates will present to Council rejoinders to opening statements made to-day. Question will then probably be referred to a sub-committee for examination in detail."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 19.

*Consul London to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 4.)*

(No. 283.)

(Telegraphic.) *En clair.*

STEWARD for Koppel:—

"Amery, morning's Council meeting, refuted arguments Turks, which largely consisted passages taken from commissioners' report, which, divorced from relative passage, gave impression contrary to main conclusions. Pointed out that Turkey claimed change in existing state affairs, but Britain asked for continuance *status quo*, with slight modifications of frontier to make it easier to administrate and defend, thus permitting reduction armaments and release of funds for country's development. Existing situation is, country enjoying better, more peaceful government than for thousand years and population desire continuance. Asked if Turks willing give autonomy Kurds, if handed over. Replying this afternoon. Turks declined answer question as to Kurdish autonomy and also omitted to reaffirm pledge to accept decision League. Council went into secret committee, Amery and Turkish delegates attending."

No. 20.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 4.)*

(No. 115.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Constantinople, September 4, 1925.*

BAGDAD telegram No. 472 to Colonial Office.

Turkish public and press show much nervousness, which is increased by foolish action of Government in closing the Bourse and prohibiting foreign exchange transactions. Nor will postponement of League's decision for a fortnight help matters.

If you wish, I could inform Turkish Government of contemplated reinforcements at Rowanduz, but I should get no answer from them, as they would be reluctant to say either "yes" or "no." It seems to me that I had better tell them of what is contemplated, and Irak authorities should decide strictly according to local merits  
(Repeated to Bagdad.)

No. 21.

*Consul London to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 5.)*

(No. 285.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Geneva, September 4, 1925.*

AT Council this morning Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs was invited to reply to Mr. Amery's statement of yesterday, but said he felt it unnecessary to add anything to his previous speech. Mr. Amery's arguments had only strengthened his conviction regarding justice of Turkey's claim. Turkey had renounced sovereignty over mandated territory of Syria by Angora Agreement, confirmed by Treaty of Lausanne, and over Turkish provinces to the south of the disputed area by that

treaty; Turkey's interests were not affected by system of government in those districts to which she wished peace and prosperity. As regards protection of minorities, he could not consent to discuss this question, which was not in dispute at all; British Government were apparently proposing to modify minorities clauses in Treaty of Lausanne, which was a dangerous adventure.

Mr. Amery then answered in detail Turkish statement of yesterday afternoon. He criticised Turkish method of taking certain passages in commission's report out of their context and of quoting from Turkish assessor's diaries. He showed, with numerous illustrations, that result of this method had been to ignore or misrepresent final conclusions of commission under several heads. He pointed out that British claim was not aggressive, but only for a slight rectification of existing provisional frontier, such as would simplify administration, facilitate defence of the country and settlement of Assyrians, and reduce expenditure. He repeated his previous assurance that His Majesty's Government would accept whatever decision Council might give, and asked whether Turkish delegate could renew, on behalf of his Government, similar assurance given to Council by Fethi Bey last year. He laid special stress on point that it was Turkish, not British, claim which would involve a departure from existing system of restoration of territory to alien sovereignty against wishes and interests of population and possible menace to peace of the Near East.

After short and ineffective rejoinder by Turkish delegate, who ignored Mr. Amery's request for renewed assurance that Turkey would accept decision of Council, it was decided in short private session to appoint sub-committee of three (as at Brussels last October) to examine and report to Council.

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 22.

*Consul London to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 5.)*

(No. 287.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for Cabinet:—

"Amery's presentation of British case has throughout been very able and has impressed Council favourably as far as I can judge. He will return here Tuesday or Wednesday to watch committee's proceedings."

No. 23.

*Mr. Wellesley (for the Secretary of State) to Sir R. Lindsay (Constantinople).*

(No. 117.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Foreign Office, September 5, 1925.*

BAGDAD telegram No. 472 of 1st September to Colonial Office, repeated to you: Incursions of Sayyid Abdullah's followers into Turkish territory at Shapatan and in Shemsdinan.

You may inform Turkish Government that it has been ascertained that followers of Sayyid Abdullah who recently made incursion into Turkish territory in Shemsdinan did not concentrate in Irak territory for that purpose. In view, however, of the importance of ensuring that Irak territory is not utilised as a base for attacks on Turkish forces by any refugees from Turkish territory, Sir H. Dobbs contemplates sending a force of Assyrian levies to the frontier in the neighbourhood of Rowanduz, where no military posts are at present established.

You may add that His Majesty's Government trust that this preventive measure intended to secure peace of frontier will not be misinterpreted by Turks or form subject of further accusations.

(Addressed to Constantinople, No. 117. Repeated to Bagdad, No. 15.)

## No. 24.

Mr. Addison to Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Geneva).—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received September 6.)

(No. 325.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Berlin, September 5, 1925.

TURKISH Ambassador yesterday addressed a demonstration of Turks assembled outside the Turkish Embassy on question of Mosul. Speaking from his balcony, he made a long speech, during which he stated that Turkey would not recognise any frontier imposed by England, or even by League of Nations, and that he hoped that a plebiscite would be held under auspices of a commission of neutrals, result of which could not fail to be favourable to Turkey.

## No. 25.

Consul London to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 6.)

(No. 288.)

(Telegraphic.)

Geneva, September 6, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to First Lord of the Admiralty and for Cabinet circulation:—

“ Reference Turkish complaints of action of British fleet, and Sir R. Keyes’ answers.

“ It is of course true that attitude of Turkish Government is quite unreasonable, and that their object is to create trouble and to prejudice the consideration of British case by Council, but for this very reason it is clearly our interest not only to give them no cause but also to leave them no excuse for such allegations. I cannot help feeling that admiral scarcely appreciates importance of this consideration. You will at once realise how much more difficult Amery’s task will be made if there is any repetition of an incident which cannot be altogether satisfactorily explained, or which even seems to Council to require explanation. I beg that utmost caution may be enjoined on admiral. His view of what Turkish Government would do if it were wise is no doubt sound, but as Turkish Government do not see their interests in the same light, and as wisdom is not the chief characteristic of their policy, it is not helpful at this moment.

## No. 26.

Consul London to High Commissioner, Bagdad.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received September 7.)

(No. 289.)

(Telegraphic.)

Geneva, September 6, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

“ Sub-committee is now studying documents and will commence taking evidence on Wednesday. I am having detailed memorandum prepared on strategical and administrative merits of our proposed frontier as compared with Brussels line and also on Assyrian question. I should be grateful for any fresh arguments which may have occurred to you on perusal of Frontier Commission’s report. What is your and Air Officer Commanding’s opinion as to saving in strength of military and police forces which would result from the adoption of our line as opposed to Brussels line? Do you adhere to successive alternative frontiers put forward in your despatch, Secret, of 18th October, 1923. It may of course be necessary at some stage to indicate that we would be satisfied with something less than our full claim, though I do not propose to do this at present.”

(Repeated to Foreign Office for Colonial Office and Air Ministry.)

## No. 27.

Mr. Addison (No. 15) to Consul London (Geneva).—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received September 7.)

(No. 326.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Berlin, September 7, 1925.

FOLLOWING for Secretary of State:—

“ Your unnumbered telegram of 6th September.

“ Following is translation of German text of Turkish Ambassador’s reference to League, which was published in ‘Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung’ :—

“ The Turkish people are totally unwilling to recognise any frontiers in area in question imposed by England, or even by League of Nations. Turkey knows only one frontier, namely, that which divides Turkish population from foreign races. The Turkish people place their hope in decision of League of Nations, but should their inviolable rights not be recognised they are determined to have recourse to all possible means for attainment of their national claims, including in the last resort a recourse to armed force.”

“ Member of Embassy staff happened to be a witness of demonstration, but could not, of course, understand speech, which was delivered in Turkish.

“ Copy of ‘Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung’ of 6th September, morning edition, despatched to-day.”

## No. 28.

Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 8.)

(No. 116.)

(Telegraphic.)

Constantinople, September 7, 1925.

DECLARATIONS of Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs at Geneva may well be ineffective in Europe, but they are telegraphed at length here and are having the effect of envenoming the situation. Press clings to the thesis of no compromise with all the unanimity inevitable under the present régime, and is undoubtedly working up the public, including the military class, to a state of excitement. There are no signs of any desire on the part of Turkish Government to prevent matters from coming to a serious crisis, but it is quite strong enough to face the inevitable disappointment of Turkish public with relative equanimity if it wishes to.

It is reported here that there is some divergence of views at Angora between Prime Minister and President, former being more in favour of moderation. Confirmation is to be found in the nomination of a man like Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs to represent Turkish Government at Geneva. This is an unpleasant symptom.

I hear that Russian influence has for some weeks been on the increase. This is a natural result of any estrangement from His Majesty’s Government, which, however, it tends to increase. On general grounds, while confident that Russian Government desires bad blood between Turkey and Great Britain, I doubt their wishing for an actual breach.

French Ambassador has, I believe, telegraphed urging his Government to seek some sort of compromise over Mosul between Turkish Government and His Majesty’s Government.

(Repeated to Geneva, No. 3.)

## No. 29.

Consul London to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 10.)

(No. 295.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Geneva, September 9, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for Cabinet and all Departments concerned:—

“ With reference to my report of meeting of Cabinet Ministers now in Geneva on Mosul question, sent by bag to-night, further information has led us to modify our decision. Full report will be sent by to-morrow’s bag.”

No. 30.

*Consul London to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 11.)*  
(No. 301.)

(Telegraphic.)

FOLLOWING for King, Cabinet and Dominions:—

Following from Secretary of State for Colonies:—

"Sub-committee will hear British case to-morrow. Cause of delay is understood to be disquieting effect produced upon Swedish chairman and Uruguayan member by Turkish legal arguments. These are said to be summarised under two main heads:—

"First, Turkish acceptance in advance of League's decision was given in circumstances which pointed to early termination of British connection with Irak, and new element now introduced by commission's recommendation for prolongation of Irak Treaty is said to modify or even cancel Turkish assurance of last year.

"Secondly, Turks maintain that it is beyond competence of Council to insist when fixing frontier upon any conditions such as those recommended in report. Turks are said to have threatened reference of these points to Permanent Court of International Justice in the event of League giving decision unfavourable to them, and have announced that if partition is decided upon they will abandon these legal arguments. While remaining unconvinced that either of these points has any real weight, I thought it desirable to consult Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Cecil last night in the light of serious warning received by me that majority of sub-committee would inevitably head for partition unless their doubts on legal aspect could be finally allayed. It had been suggested to me that in order to forestall Turkish action it might be politic for me, after laying our legal case before sub-committee, to volunteer to refer the two points to Permanent Court of International Justice if sub-committee remained in any doubt. After careful and prolonged discussion with my two colleagues, we arrived at the conclusion that, while it would be wise to accept reference to international court rather than to allow sub-committee to drift into a thoroughly vicious conclusion such as Lesser Zab line, it was not yet sufficiently established that this was to be anticipated. It seemed to us that to volunteer reference to international court on mere hearsay rumour that sub-committee were deeply impressed by arguments which appear to have been presented to them informally and not to be included in their official statement, and which appear easily capable of refutation, would be a sign of weakness and would encourage Turks to redouble their efforts to frighten Council by vague threats of non-acceptance. I shall accordingly pursue my original plan of presenting arguments for [† modified] frontier before sub-committee to-morrow after first dealing with Turkish written rejoinder to my last speech. I shall then invite Sir C. Hurst to argue legal points, but shall make no mention of reference to international court unless this appears inevitable owing to attitude of sub-committee. We are fully conscious of administrative and other objections to delay involved in this reference, but these must be faced if alternative is decision that disputed territory should be partitioned."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 31.

*Consul London to Mr. Wellesley.—(Received September 12.)*  
(No. 308.)

(Telegraphic.)

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for the Colonies for Colonial Office:—

"I attended meetings of sub-committee this morning and afternoon partly in order to further our claims for a better strategical and administrative frontier and answer questions on various points, but more particularly to clear up legal question of competence of Council to attach conditions or take note of declarations made with regard to future policy before fixing frontier. On this

issue Sir Cecil Hurst made full statement which undoubtedly impressed the sub-committee. At the end of the proceedings I laid stress on our anxiety that there should be no doubt on this point in conversations, and added that I would be willing, if sub-committee after further debating Sir C. Hurst's statement still felt there was any doubt, to do anything possible to help to remove it. The sub-committee informed me that they would let us know about this in a day or two. They know that my undertaking implied willingness to agree to reference to Permanent Court."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

[E 5525/32/65]

No. 32.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 14.)*

(No. 692.)  
Sir,

*Therapia, September 8, 1925.*

I REGRET to report that since the 25th August, the date of my despatch No. 660, the tone of the Turkish press on the subject of the Irak frontier has suffered a notable change for the worse and there are everywhere clear signs of increasing excitement. Disagreeable as this may be, it is perhaps not surprising in the circumstance of the moment. Frontier incidents, reported vaguely and inaccurately from Angora, make the public think that a sort of guerilla warfare is being organised against Turkish territory from the Irak side of the line. The movements of the Mediterranean fleet are interpreted and resented as a menace, though curiously enough far less is said of the visit of two cruisers to Black Sea ports and of unarmed parties of sailors landing at Gallipoli to see the cemeteries than of more trivial incidents such as target practice in the Aegean, the use of searchlights, or the flight of airplanes; as to which I have at present only vague information. The most important cause, however, of the present excitement is the purely psychological one. Long delay in dealing with the frontier question and the constant dangling of it before the eyes of the public has invested the whole matter with an appearance of importance to Turkey which, I cannot help feeling, it does not really possess; and now that the moment of settlement really is at hand, every feeling of patriotism, national pride and interest is evoked and receives expression in support of a cause which to Turkey may merit a tribute of sentiment, but hardly any serious material sacrifice.

2. The detail of the arguments set forth in the ill-edited papers of Turkey are as difficult to reproduce or analyse as those of a sermon by a country parson. They consist mainly of sweeping conclusions drawn from altogether erroneous and unjustified assumptions. There have been violent protests against delay in rendering of the League's verdict which His Majesty's Government are said to desire, completely ignoring the fact that Tewfik Rushdi Bey opened the proceedings at Geneva with a request for a twenty-four hour postponement and that you only acquiesced reluctantly. There is much indignation at what is regarded as the intrusion of the mandate question into the discussions; and the whole mandatory principle is hotly impugned—the more so, perhaps, because the Independence Tribunals have brought up against some of the persons arraigned before them their alleged inclinations in the early days of the armistice towards having Turkey put under a mandate. Yet from this Embassy it looks as if the fixing of a frontier line is the only point with which Turkey is concerned, and that she has nothing to do with the régime that may be established to the south of the line when fixed. Of course, the position of Great Britain as a trustee, the basic principle of the mandatory system, is completely ignored, and the fact that she is unable to give away territory and rights which she only holds as a depositary is ascribed to mere imperialism and land grabbing, and contrasted with the Turkish case, based, in spite of the League's Sub-Commission's Report, on the invincible desire of the Mosulis to revert to Turkish sovereignty, and on the necessity of securing a frontier which will guarantee Turkey against aggression.

3. What Turkish newspapers may write really matters only in reference to the inferences that we may draw from their attitude and to the consequences that may ensue. It would be going too far to say that the local press only writes what the Government wishes it to write; but it is perfectly legitimate, under the present régime of repression, to maintain that no paper would dare give currency to opinions that are displeasing to Angora, and we must inevitably conclude that the Turkish

authorities are not averse to seeing public opinion systematically prepared for a contingency in which, if an unfavourable verdict is rendered, the Turkish Government will reject that verdict and face the consequences. I do not think that any paper, any more than any Turkish Minister, has actually said that Turkey will refuse to be bound by a decision adverse to herself; but it is dinned into the ears of newspaper readers that the Turkish case for Mosul is absolutely coincident with the conceptions of abstract justice, and that injustice may lead to war. The newspaper reading public, and especially the important class of army officers, are being wrought up to a regrettable degree of exaltation.

4. I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's High Commissioner at Bagdad and to the British delegation at Geneva.

I have, &c.  
R. C. LINDSAY.

No. 33.

*Consul London to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 15.)*

(No. 316.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Geneva, September 14, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Amery:—

"Turks have now urged, basing themselves on discovery of an unfortunate statement made by Lord Curzon at Lausanne in January 1923 (Blue Book, p. 401, end of third paragraph), that they are only bound to accept a decision of Council in which they themselves concur. In view of effect this appears to have had in increasing irresolution of sub-committee, who are, I understand, going to lay their doubts before an informal meeting of members of Council exclusive of British or Turks, I have to-day addressed a letter to M. Undén pointing out that when I made my statement to Council it was on the assumption that matter had been referred to Council as an arbitrator, whose decision both parties had accepted in advance and who was entitled to impose any conditions that he thought fit or take note of assurances. Since both competence of Council and character of decision to be given have been called in question, I felt bound to ask sub-committee whether they could give me a definite assurance that situation is as I understood it to be when I submitted my case to Council, adding that if sub-committee felt any doubt as to their ability to give such an assurance I would suggest that an authoritative opinion on both points in doubt should be sought without delay from Permanent Court of International Justice."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 34.

*Consul London (No. 9) to High Commissioner, Bagdad.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received September 17.)*

(No. 326.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Geneva, September 16, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Amery:—

"In reply to my protest based on your telegrams Nos. 501, 505 and 506, Turkish representative has informed Council that he is referring to his Government, though incidents complained of appear to him most unlikely. He complains of [? alleged] recent arrival of detachments of 200 men each at Zakho, Dohuk, Amadia and Zibar with eight mountain batteries. Also of continual passage of convoys of ammunition being sent to Zakho, recruiting of fresh troops and restrictions on movement of villagers from one village to another. Please telegraph your observations urgently. Figure of 8,000 Goyan Christians certainly seems high. From what actual district are they said to have been deported?"

(Repeated to Constantinople, No. 10.)

No. 35.

*Consul London to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 18.)*

(No. 334.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Geneva, September 18, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

"An informal meeting of members of Council yesterday afternoon discussed, in the absence of British and Turkish representatives, question of procedure as regards Irak frontier, and decided that certain questions should be submitted to Permanent Court. These are, I gather: firstly, whether legal sovereignty has already been renounced by Turkey, south of whatever line Council may fix, and cession becomes automatic on announcement of Council's decision.

"Secondly, whether submission of parties has been to Council as an arbitrator or as mediator.

"Thirdly, whether, if Council is arbitrator, it can decide by majority like [? omitted: any] other body of arbitrators or is bound by ordinary rules of its procedure under Covenant. Question of competence to take note of assurances of parties is apparently not to be raised, as all were agreed that there could be no doubt of Council's right to do so. Sub-committee will accordingly draft a report recommending reference to Permanent Court on these points, which will be presented to formal meeting of Council to-morrow afternoon.

"I understand that though question of merits was not discussed to any extent yesterday, but for M. Undén Council would have had no difficulty in coming to a decision in favour of commission's main recommendation that country up to Brussels line should remain with Irak. M. Undén apparently is determined that he is a mediator and that he is bound to give Turks half of what they ask. The others hope that even if The Hague should not decide that majority is sufficient, its decision on arbitral character of Council in this matter may influence M. Undén sufficiently to make him withdraw from position which would prevent any conclusion being reached by the Council and so gravely discredit League.

"This postpones an actual decision till [? December], but serious inconveniences of delay will have been worth while if reasonable settlement is reached. Meanwhile, sub-committee will go on taking evidence for a few days longer, and I may have to stay here till Wednesday."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 36.

*Consul London to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 20.)*

(No. 340.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

Geneva, September 19, 1925.

[? FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for the Colonies:—]

Following is text of resolution passed by Council this afternoon:—

"Council of League of Nations, having been seized of question of frontier between Turkey and Irak by application of article 3, paragraph 2, of Treaty of Lausanne, decides for purpose of elucidating certain points of law to request Permanent Court of International Justice to give an advisory opinion on following questions:—

"1. What is character of decision to be taken by Council in virtue of article 3, paragraph 2, of Treaty of Lausanne? Is it an arbitral award, a recommendation or a simple mediation?

"2. Must decision be unanimous or may it be taken by a majority?

"3. May representatives of interested parties take part in vote?"

"Permanent Court is requested to examine these questions, if possible, in an extraordinary session.

"Council requests Governments of Great Britain and Turkey to be at the disposal of court for the purpose of furnishing it with all relevant documents or information. It has the honour to transmit to court minutes of meetings of

Council at which question of frontier between Turkey and Irak has been examined.

"Secretary-General is authorised to submit present request to court together with all relevant documents, to explain to court action taken by Council in the matter, to give all assistance necessary in examination of question, and if necessary to take steps to be represented before court."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 37.

*Consul London (No. 13) to High Commissioner, Bagdad.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received September 22.)*

(No. 348.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Geneva, September 21, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

"On 17th September Turkish representative informed Council that he had received communication from his Government to the effect that allegations relative to deportation of Christians in any part whatever of Turkey were absolutely devoid of foundation.

"Contents of your telegram No. 518 to London and first paragraph of part 2 were communicated by me to Council on 19th September. I have now asked for special meeting of Council to be held on 23rd September to consider question of deportation of Christians. I have pointed out that deportations south of Brussels line are unquestionably violation of article 3 of Treaty of Lausanne, and those between Brussels line and His Majesty's Government's line are regarded by us as equally culpable. I have invited Council to send such representative or representatives to the locality of the Brussels line as may be required for the purpose of investigating, so far as possible, the charges already made by both Governments as to alleged violations of *status quo* and of reporting immediately to Council in the event of any similar occurrence in the future. I have assured Council that His Majesty's Government and Irak Government would welcome the presence of such representative on their side of the Brussels line and would afford him every assistance. Any additional material you can furnish for the meeting on 23rd September will be useful."

(Repeated to Constantinople.)

No. 38.

*Consul London (No. 15) to High Commissioner, Bagdad.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received September 23.)*

(No. 352.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Geneva, September 23, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from Mr. Amery:—

"In his letter of the 22nd September Turkish representative repeats statement that no deportation of Christians has taken place from districts of Ga . . . and Goyen, nor from other parts of the country to these districts. He adds that Turkish post at Sheikh Yussuf, south of and quite near Hill 2672, west of Hazil, in the district of Slupi, has been attacked by six Iraki soldiers. Turkish post having replied to assailants' fire, latter withdrew and subsequently admitted they were in the wrong and had attacked Turkish post in error.

"Special Council meeting has been postponed till afternoon of 24th September. I shall be glad of your observations as soon as possible."

(Repeated to Constantinople.)

No. 39.

*Consul London to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 24.)*

(No. 355.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Geneva, September 24, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

"I have agreed to 26th October for special session of Permanent Court of International Justice to deal with Irak frontier question, and have undertaken to file memorandum with necessary paper by 21st October. I am most anxious that Sir C. Hurst should undertake presentation of our case, and hope that you will be able to agree. Sir C. Hurst is telegraphing separately."

(Repeated to Bagdad and Constantinople.)

No. 40.

*Consul London to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 25.)*

(No. 358.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Geneva, September 24, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for Colonies:—

"At to-day's public Council meeting following on prolonged secret session *rappoiteur* of sub-committee read out report and resolution giving effect to our proposal for appointment of a representative to investigate situation on Turco-Irak frontier. After I had accepted, Rushdy, who had originally declared he would not accept or even attend Council, read out a confused and involved statement accepting on condition that there should be a Turkish assessor and that investigation should go into the whole situation at the time of Treaty of Lausanne and every frontier incident since. His denial that anything north of Brussels line is disputed territory and his assertion that anything which may have happened there can only be dealt with as a minority question under an entirely different investigation left it, however, quite uncertain whether he accepted reference to his side of the border at all, and no questioning from me extracted anything from him except evasive replies so obviously embarrassed as to provoke a general titter.

"In the end he said that he would consult his Government, and I fear I must now wait here for reply and a possible further Council meeting on Saturday. If they accept investigation on their side of the border we may have to agree to a certain amount of historical enquiry and to a Turkish assessor, though I made it clear latter would have to be one approved by us and conditional on our assessor also being free to go on Turkish side of frontier, and that former must not be allowed to divert League representative from practical business in hand. If they refuse, then naturally Turkish stipulations including assessor fall to the ground."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 41.

*Consul London to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 26.)*

(No. 361.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Geneva, September 25, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

"M. Loucheur informed me this afternoon that Rushdy Bey is going back to Angora for further instructions as to proposed League representative on Turco-Irak frontier, but that Council would in any case appoint its representative on Monday and let him get to work on our side of boundary whether Turkish Government subsequently agrees to his investigating on Turkish side or not. I pointed out to him that in latter event there could be no question of Turkish

assessor or of any Turkish suggestions or stipulations as to conduct of enquiries. M. Loucheur agreed. I understood from him that name likely to be suggested on Monday is that of Roddolo, who acted as secretary to Irak Commission, and who would, I assume, be quite satisfactory."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 42.

*Consul London to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 28.)*

(No. 372.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

FOLLOWING from Lord Cecil:—

"Irak.

"Council in secret session to-day appointed General Laidoner League Commissioner to supervise Brussels frontier. Two adjoints will be given him, of whom one might be Czech colonel, the other to be named by Committee of Three and approved by acting president of the Council. Two others, officers or officials, would be added by secretary.

"It was expressly understood that General Laidoner was to be in full and sole responsibility. Please inform Secretary of State for the Colonies."

No. 43.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 29.)*

(No. 46.)

(Telegraphic.)

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Considerable easterly troop movements reported between Adana and Ourfa. No details or confirmation. No movements by rail. Soueida was relieved on 24th September. It was burnt and evacuated by column and garrison, who returned to Musifre on 26th September. Further operations are intended, based on Musifre."

(Repeated to Palestine and Bagdad.)

[E 6156/32/65]

No. 44.

*Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the Mosul Question at the League of Nations.*

FOR some time before the meeting of the Council to consider the question of the Turco-Iraq frontier it was becoming increasingly evident that the Turks had decided to conduct their case on aggressive and truculent lines. At the end of June a series of preposterous and wholly unfounded complaints were circulated to the members of the Council by the Turkish Government to the effect that persons venturing to express pro-Turkish sympathies before the Frontier Commission had been molested by the British and Iraq authorities; that immediately after the departure of the Commission wholesale reprisals began against those who declared for Turkey; that these persons were pressed to sign manifestos going back on their previous declarations, and that those who refused to do so were imprisoned; and that there had been a series of bombardments by the British Air Force as a reprisal for pro-Turkish demonstrations in the frontier region. At the same time the first steps were taken in an aggressive policy along the present frontier, involving not only the occupation of several villages on the Iraq side of the frontier and the deportation or hurried flight of their inhabitants, but also the systematic clearing out of the Chaldean Christian population of the Goyan region to the north of the frontier. This latter policy was actually put into full effect in the week immediately following the opening of the Session of the Council.

It was apparently as a smoke-screen to cover these impending operations that the Turkish Foreign Minister, Dr. Tewfik Rushdy, opened his Geneva campaign

with the request that, before any other business was dealt with, the Council should allow him to draw attention to the serious situation created by an alleged recent series of violations of the Iraq frontier by the Iraq authorities and by the menacing demonstrations conducted by the Mediterranean Fleet against the coasts of Asia Minor. These complaints, devoid of any basis of fact or even of inherent credibility, provided a thoroughly characteristic opening for the new Turkish representative at the first meeting of the Council, which took place on the 3rd September.

We had already been warned by Sir R. Lindsay, our Ambassador at Constantinople, that the sending of Dr. Tewfik Rushdy was to be regarded as a victory for the extremists as against the more moderate views favoured by Ismet Pasha, and I have since learned from other sources that this wild young man, who studied revolutionary methods under Lenin, came to Geneva determined to convey to the League and the world in general that he was one of those men of destiny whom nothing could ever turn back from a policy he had once decided on, and that the gravest consequences were to be feared if Turkey did not get full satisfaction for her demands. His controversial methods, I was told, consisted of bold assertions and ingenious and plausible arguments produced for immediate effect regardless of subsequent disproof. I had plenty of opportunity of verifying the accuracy of these descriptions. These qualities were combined with a striking physiognomy, not so much Turkish as Hittite: a flat forehead, continued by scanty hair brushed straight back, receding so markedly as to make an actual angle with the steeper line of the nose, smoked horn-rimmed spectacles, and a large loose mouth irregularly garnished with brown and gold teeth.

Having dealt briefly with the Turkish charges I proceeded to make my opening statement. Knowing that the Turk had been freely hinting in various quarters that he would not regard himself as bound by any decision he disliked, I began by laying special stress on the fact that both parties had formally declared last year that they accepted in advance the decision of the Council. I then disposed of the legal point as to the continuance of Turkish sovereignty which the Frontier Commission had, in a rather misleading fashion, included among the political considerations affecting the situation, and which, I notice, has since been used by certain critics at home as implying that the Commission had reported that the Turkish claim was legally justified. I pointed out that while it might be technically correct to say that the disputed territory was still Turkish, in so far as the formal renunciation of Turkish sovereignty had not yet been completed, it was quite clear that the Turkish Government, by the Treaty of Lausanne, had bound themselves to renounce sovereignty over whatever part of it lay on the Iraq side of the frontier ultimately fixed by the Council. After referring briefly to the work of the Commission and the difficulties which it had necessarily encountered in Iraq, I quoted the conclusion arrived at by the Commissioners that a plebiscite was impossible, and then proceeded to recapitulate, without comment or criticism, the final conclusions in the Report, leading up to the main final conclusion that the balance of the various considerations, particularly those of an economic and geographical character, as well as the wishes of the population as a whole, operated in favour of the continued union with Iraq of the whole territory south of the Brussels line, subject to the continuance for some twenty-five years of "the effective mandate of the League" and to certain concessions to local and racial sentiment in the Kurdish districts.

I pointed out that this main recommendation implied a question addressed to His Majesty's Government. Was that Government prepared to undertake towards the League of Nations to maintain the conditions subject to which the Commission recommended that the whole of the disputed area up to the Brussels line should remain part of Iraq? After drawing a distinction between mandatory control and the treaty relation which was approved last year by the Council of the League, and which was clearly the relation intended in the Commission's references to the mandate, I pointed out that it was, in my opinion, unwise to lay down definitely in advance the precise period during which the Iraq State could consolidate its position and develop its resources. Subject to these explanations, I said, in accordance with the Cabinet conclusions of the 7th August, that His Majesty's Government were prepared, before the expiration in 1928 of the present treaty, to give effect to the provision contained in the protocol of that treaty by replacing it by a treaty of longer duration which would safeguard throughout the kingdom of Iraq those conditions of stable government and reasonable consideration for local interests, subject to which the Commissioners considered that the territory south of the Brussels line should continue in its present union with Iraq; and that they were prepared to continue their responsibility towards the League of Nations in this

respect until such time, within the limit of twenty-five years suggested by the Commissioners, as the Council of the League was clearly convinced that those conditions of stability which the Commissioners postulated were definitely and permanently secured. I read out a resolution passed by the Iraq Parliament only two days before, to the effect that the Iraq nation declared its strong friendship for Great Britain and expressed its desire to continue an alliance with her after the expiry of the present treaty. I also gave an assurance that the existing administrative system in the Kurdish areas, which does to a large extent carry out the recommendations of the Commission, would be continued and made even more effective.

I then dealt at some length, and in strong terms, with the grave objections to the alternative suggestion, which had not, indeed, been recommended by the Commissioners on their own responsibility, but merely hinted at by them, namely, that the territory south of the Brussels line might be partitioned between Turkey and Iraq. I made it clear in this connection that the League could not expect the British Government or the British taxpayer to make themselves responsible for the military and financial consequences of such a partition which might involve a burden entirely beyond the capacity of Iraq itself. The rest of my statement was taken up by an exposition of the strategical and other arguments for the British case for a slight rectification of the frontier up to the crest of the main mountain range, in which I laid special stress on the necessity for ensuring a satisfactory settlement of the Assyrian problem. I also added that I accepted the Commission's recommendations for special measures to ensure the protection of minorities on the assumption that the Turkish Government would similarly accept them in Turkish territory, and that the League would be prepared, in spite of the obvious administrative objections, to make an experiment in this direction. I said, in conclusion, that the only concern of His Majesty's Government was to safeguard both the interests of the populations directly concerned and the development and progress of the young nation for whose welfare they had, under the League of Nations, made themselves responsible. His Majesty's Government were convinced that the fulfilment of that responsibility and the attainment of the objects in view could only be adequately ensured by the acceptance of the frontier claim which they had themselves put forward. Any less satisfactory frontier would present serious disadvantages. I impressed upon the Council the immense importance of arriving at a final solution during the present session of the Council, and concluded, as I had begun, by repeating the assurance given last year by Lord Parmoor that, whatever decision the Council might come to, His Majesty's Government would loyally accept it.

At the afternoon session on the same day, Dr. Rushdy gabbled through a long and rambling statement, in which he made an ingenious attempt to misrepresent the Commission's report as generally favourable to the Turkish claims, quoting various passages apart from their context and introducing lengthy extracts from the totally irrelevant reports submitted to his own Government by the Turkish assessor with the Frontier Commission. He made great play with the conclusions of the Commission regarding legal sovereignty, and rebuked them for exceeding their functions by introducing the issue of the duration of the mandate.

On the 4th September, at the morning session, the Turkish representative made a very brief and ineffective reply to my statement of the preceding day, in which the only point worth noting was a refusal to consent to the discussion of the question of the protection of minorities. I then proceeded to deal in detail with his statement of the preceding afternoon. In reply to his suggestion that British claims were continually advancing, and that all that Turkey asked for was security, I laid special stress on the point that it was the Turkish, and not the British, claim which, if accepted, would cause a menace to the peace of the Near East, as it would involve a departure from the existing system set up under the auspices of the League, and the restoration of a now well-governed territory to an alien sovereignty against the wishes and interests of the population. I repeated my previous assurance that His Majesty's Government would accept whatever decision the Council might give, and asked whether the Turkish delegate could renew on behalf of his Government the similar assurance given to the Council last year by Fethy Bey. Dr. Rushdy, in his brief rejoinder, evaded my question whether he would give any undertaking that the Kurdish elements in the disputed area would, if they were given back to Turkey, be granted a measure of autonomy, such as they enjoyed at present, and he ignored my request for a renewed assurance that Turkey would accept the decision of the Council. I was in some doubt whether to repeat my challenge on this latter point,

but was induced by M. Briand, the President, to say nothing at the moment, as he proposed to draw attention to it himself at the private session, which followed immediately afterwards, and appointed a sub-committee of three members, who were to consider the whole question in detail and report to the Council. As a matter of fact, all that M. Briand did was, at the end of the meeting, in a hurried undertone, to "remind both parties that they had placed their cause solemnly in the hands of the League of Nations, of which the Council formed a part, and that they were awaiting from the Council that justice which it would endeavour to grant them."

As my colleagues will have seen from the memorandum (C.P. 403/25) circulated by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, dated the 9th September, I discussed with him and with Lord Cecil the same evening the desirability of calling the attention of the Secretary-General in an official letter to the silence of the Turkish representative, and of refusing to attend the sub-committee or instructing my advisers to attend it, until I knew what steps the Council proposed to take to secure the necessary explicit assurance from Dr. Rushdy. We decided, for the reasons explained in the memorandum referred to, to take no action. Next morning we received a report from Berlin that the Turkish Ambassador had addressed a demonstration of Turks outside the Turkish Embassy on the previous day, and had said that Turkey would not recognise any frontier imposed by England or by the League of Nations. In a fuller report, received on the 7th September, it appeared that, in an interview with a correspondent of a German newspaper, he had added that the Turkish people placed their hope in the decision of the League of Nations, but, should their inviolable rights not be recognised there, were determined to have recourse to all possible means for the attainment of their national claims, including, in the last resort, a recourse to armed force. A report was also received from Constantinople on the 7th September to the effect that the declarations of Dr. Rushdy at Geneva were envenoming the situation in Turkey, and that the press was undoubtedly working up the public, including the military class, to a state of excitement. My colleagues will have seen from the memorandum referred to that the position was again discussed with Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Cecil on the 9th September. Our view was that the time had not arrived to attempt to extract a further assurance from the Turkish representative, and that, failing some more definite indication on the part of the Turkish Government that they intended to repudiate the assurance given last year by Fethy Bey, it would not be politic for me to take any further steps in the matter.

Meanwhile, the Sub-Committee, consisting of Dr. Undén, M. Quiñones de León and M. Guani, the Swedish, Spanish and Uruguayan members of the Council, had been holding its preliminary meetings at which it heard separately the three members of the Frontier Commission. All of them, I understand, impressed upon the Sub-Committee, in far more definite terms than those employed in their Report, the undoubted wish of the majority of the population of the contested territory to remain in Iraq. There would, I believe, have been no difficulty in securing an early report of the Sub-Committee, and consequently also of the Council, in favour of our claim, as far at any rate as the present frontier is concerned, but for the extraordinary position taken up by Dr. Undén, who, owing to M. Branting's death, had succeeded to the Chairmanship of the Sub-Committee. Dr. Undén, a young Professor of Law, with bushy eyebrows, great obstinacy, and an abysmal incapacity even to conceive that the conditions of Asia are not exactly the same as those of Europe, appears to have decided from the first that the territory was to be divided along the line of the Lesser Zab. As far as I have been able to gather from his colleagues, and from a memorandum which he circulated to all the Council, except myself—incidentally without any intimation that this was contrary to the views of his colleagues on the Sub-Committee and, indeed, without their knowledge—his main ideas may be summed up as follows: The Turks had the country before the war and ought to get back as much of it as possible subject to the state of Iraq being still able to exist; the economic and strategic arguments showing that Iraq could not maintain itself if pushed back to the Lesser Zab line could easily be disposed of by economic and military guarantees (I am informed that he himself suggested the idea of a Pact to the Turks); the wishes of the population were really unascertainable and not a matter of any consequence; in any event, the business of the Council was to mediate and compromise, and as the English were ready to accept anything and the Turks were threatening trouble unless they got what they wanted, it was necessary to give them a good deal.

In the first instance, however, it would seem that Dr. Undén's method of procedure was to endeavour to alarm his colleagues on the Sub-Committee by suggesting, as a Professor of Law, that the Turkish legal arguments against the competence of the Council to introduce conditions, such as the prolongation of the Treaty relation, in respect of a territory still juridically Turkish, were so serious as to make a clear decision in favour of Iraq impossible, and that it was necessary to give the Turks enough to make them waive their insistence on this aspect of the matter. It was reported to us that M. Guani, a gentle, colourless Uruguayan, had been seriously impressed, and that the Sub-Committee, overriding M. Quiñones de León, would inevitably recommend the partition of the disputed area unless their doubts on the legal aspect could be allayed. The suggestion was conveyed to us that it might be politic for me, after laying our own legal case before the Sub-Committee, to volunteer to refer the legal questions to the Permanent Court of International Justice, if the Sub-Committee remained in any doubt. After careful and prolonged discussion with Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Cecil, we arrived at the conclusion that, while it would be wise to accept a reference to the International Court rather than to allow the Sub-Committee to drift into a thoroughly vicious conclusion such as partition, it was not yet sufficiently established that they were in fact going to do this.

On the 11th September I attended meetings of the Sub-Committee in the morning and the afternoon, partly to dispose of the misstatements and quibbles contained in a further long memorandum which the Turks had circulated as a somewhat belated rejoinder to my two speeches, partly in order to elucidate further the British claim for a better strategical and administrative frontier and to answer questions on various points, but more particularly to clear up the legal question involved. This was, whether the Council was competent to attach conditions or to take note of declarations made with regard to future policy before fixing a frontier. On this issue, as well as on the question of the legal sovereignty to which I have already referred, Sir Cecil Hurst, who accompanied me, made a full statement which undoubtedly greatly impressed the Sub-Committee. I did not at either of these meetings make any mention of reference to the Permanent Court of International Justice, but I said that I would be willing if the Sub-Committee, after further study of Sir Cecil Hurst's statement, still felt that there was any doubt, to do anything in my power to help to remove it. The Sub-Committee knew that this undertaking implied my willingness to agree to a reference to The Hague.

Two days of inaction followed, during which I received reports from various sources that the position in the Sub-Committee was becoming increasingly complicated. The Turks had brought forward an unfortunate statement made by Lord Curzon at Lausanne in January 1923, to the effect that a Council decision on the Mosul question would have to be unanimous, and that the Turks might therefore, as temporary members of the Council for the purpose of the dispute, rest assured that no decision could be taken with which they did not themselves agree. The statement was, in fact, inaccurate in its reference to the procedure of the Council under the Covenant and was obviously superseded by the Lausanne Treaty itself, as well as by the definite undertaking of both parties last September to accept in advance the decision of the Council as an arbitrator. It seems, however, to have sufficed to enable Dr. Undén to effect a certain change of front. I now received a verbal message from him that there really was no doubt whatever as to the legal competence of the Council to come to a decision. At the same time, I gathered that M. Quiñones de León, who throughout has been strongly convinced of the justice of our claim and determined not to be manœuvred into a false position, was trying very hard to force Dr. Undén to settle first of all and explicitly, in consultation with the Council if necessary, whether the Council was acting as an arbitrator or only as a mediator, in order to avoid the situation which he was evidently endeavouring to keep up in which the Turks were to regard themselves as only dealing with a mediator, and free to reject any solution with which they might not agree, while we were to continue to believe ourselves bound to our pledge to accept the decision of the Council as an arbitrator.

Learning on the 14th September that the Sub-Committee were meeting to discuss their doubts and to consider whether they should ask for a private meeting of the Council to resolve them, I thought it essential to help to bring matters to a head. I accordingly addressed a letter to Dr. Undén pointing out that when I made my original statement to the Council and renewed the assurance that His Majesty's Government accepted in advance whatever decision might be arrived at,

it was on the assumption that the matter had been referred to the Council as an arbitrator whose decision both parties had accepted in advance, and who was entitled to impose any conditions that I thought fit or to take note of assurances already given. Since both the competence of the Council and the character of the decision to be given had been called in question I felt bound to ask the Sub-Committee whether they could give me a definite assurance that the situation was as I understood it to be when I submitted my case to the Council, adding that if the Sub-Committee felt any doubt as to their ability to give such an assurance, I would suggest that an authoritative opinion on both points in doubt should be sought without delay from the Permanent Court of International Justice. I added that it was obviously difficult for His Majesty's Government to continue to submit a case without knowing in what capacity it was presenting it, or before what kind of tribunal.

This letter seems to have served its purpose in forcing Dr. Undén's hand. An informal meeting of the Council was held on the 16th, at which neither I nor the Turkish representative attended. The discussion turned almost entirely on the issue of procedure, though I understand that a very strong speech on the merits was made in our favour by M. Benes, and that the general feeling was in the same direction. It was decided that the issue of legal competence was not really in doubt, but that there was real doubt as to the function of the Council, while a point, of which I had received no previous intimation, was also raised, namely, whether, if the Council was acting as an arbitrator, it still followed its normal procedure under the Covenant, which requires unanimity, apart from the interested parties, or decided like any other panel of arbitrators by a majority. It was accordingly decided that certain questions should be submitted to the Permanent Court of International Justice, and the Sub-Committee proceeded to draft a report to this effect.

On the 19th September the full Council met again and Dr. Undén read the report of the Sub-Committee, which recommended that the following questions should be referred to The Hague Court:—

- (1.) What is the character of the decision to be taken by the Council in virtue of article 3, paragraph 2, of the Treaty of Lausanne? Is it an arbitral award, a recommendation or a simple mediation?
- (2.) Must the decision be unanimous or may it be taken by a majority? May the representatives of the interested parties take part in the vote?

As soon as the report had been read, I made a statement to the Council in which I said that the postponement which would be involved if the Council accepted the Sub-Committee's report was from the point of view of His Majesty's Government in itself regrettable; firstly, because they had hoped to get as speedy a decision as possible; secondly, because any continued uncertainty would naturally involve administrative difficulties; and thirdly, because of the recent proceedings of the Turkish Government on the frontier. I pointed out that the first question to be put before the Permanent Court seemed to me to have been settled quite clearly at last year's meeting of the Council, at which Fethi Bey had agreed with Lord Parmoor's view that the Treaty of Lausanne placed the Council in the position of an arbitrator whose ultimate award must be accepted in advance by both parties. It was on this understanding that Lord Parmoor had pledged the British Government to accept in advance the decision of the Council, and no pledge that he had then given could be binding upon His Majesty's Government in any other but the same sense, and to exactly the same extent, to which it was binding upon the Turkish Government. But I agreed that it was essential from the point of view not only of the present submission to the Council, but of future submissions, that its position should be clearly defined, and inasmuch as doubts had been raised on this point I agreed that it should be referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice. I went on to say that doubts had also been raised as to the competence of the Council to take note of assurances given by either party or to impose conditions before settling the frontier. I assumed that the fact that this question was not one of those which was to be submitted to the Permanent Court implied that there was no doubt in the mind of the Council with regard to it. I laid stress on this point, insisting that it would obviously be an unsatisfactory position from the point of view of the League itself, as well as of both the Governments concerned, if after the pronouncement of an opinion by the Permanent Court on the questions submitted to it any further doubts could be raised which would give rise to further delay.

Dr. Rushdy then came out into the open. After some preliminary flourishes, in which he repeated his categorical denial of the truth of the allegations concerning the deportation of Christians and dwelt on his efforts for peace and conciliation as evidenced by an offer which he apparently made to the Sub-Committee to allow Iraq to retain the Diala district, and supplement that generous concession by the conclusion of a four-Power Security Pact, and on the obstinate disregard by us of all the advances and all the efforts made by the Turks, he came to the business in hand. His view as to the task undertaken by the Council was perfectly clear. He regarded it as a mediating and not an arbitrating body. He based his contention, partly on the difference between the wording of the original draft of article 3 of the Lausanne Treaty, which spoke of a decision of the League, and the final draft which spoke of a reference to the League, partly on Lord Curzon's unlucky statement to which I have already referred, and which he declared Turkey regarded as an undertaking given to her by Great Britain before the world. He added that the Turkish Government saw no necessity for referring anything to the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague. The advisory opinion of that organisation, as he contemptuously styled it, could not in any way affect the rights held by the Turkish Government under the Treaty of Lausanne, the minutes of the Conference which resulted in that Treaty and the provisions of the Covenant as to the powers of the Council. As for any declarations made on behalf of the Turkish Government which might modify those rights, they were worthless in the absence of formal ratification by the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

The length of rope given to the Turk had proved sufficient. I was at last able definitely to put an end to the ambiguous position in which we had been ever since the proceedings began, and to make it quite clear to the Council that there could be no further question of measuring our case and that of the Turks by a different measure. I at once drew the attention of the Council to the fact that, unless I had completely misunderstood him, the Turkish representative had informed the Council that whatever might be the view of the Permanent Court he was not prepared to accept that view unless it concurred with his own, and that he had also formally disavowed the assurance given by Fethy Bey to the Council on the 30th September, 1924. If that was really the meaning of what he had said, then I was bound to make it quite clear that until the statement which he had just made was withdrawn, and until the Turkish Government definitely and explicitly renewed its pledge to accept in advance the decision of the Council, any pledge or assurance that the British Government had given fell to the ground and was non-effective. If the Turkish Government did not find themselves able to come into line again with the British Government, as it did in September last, by the time the Permanent Court had given its reply, assuming that that reply was to assign more than a mediating rôle to the Council, then the British Government would of course be in the same position of complete liberty as the Turkish Government. What I should have liked to say was that the Council in that case ought to refuse to allow the Turks to appear before it, or to give any further consideration to their claim. But I felt that, as an interested party, I could not well do more at the moment than firmly assert that we could not be put in a different position from the Turk as regards the character of our obligation.

M. Loucheur, who was presiding over the Council in the absence of M. Briand, said that there could be no question of discussing round the Council table the declarations made by the two parties. The Council was there to listen, but he need hardly say that its silence did not in any way imply acquiescence in these declarations. The Council intended to stand on the legal ground of the Treaty of Lausanne, and it was for that very reason that the Sub-Committee had proposed an appeal to the high competence of the Permanent Court in order to settle certain questions of law. The Council then adopted the conclusions of the Committee, and M. Loucheur wound up the session by reminding both parties of their undertaking to preserve the *status quo* until a decision had been reached on the subject of the frontier.

I understand that a Special Session of the Permanent Court is to be held on the 26th October and that the decision will be given about the 22nd November, in time at any rate for it to reach all concerned before the December meeting of the Council. We shall then be confronted by one of several alternatives. The Court may conceivably disregard the obvious purpose of the Treaty of Lausanne and the assurances given last September by both parties and declare the function of the Council to be a purely mediatory one. In that case we may safely presume that the Turks will accept nothing that we could possibly consider and things will simply continue *in statu quo*. If, on the other hand, the Court decides that the Council

is an arbitrator, the first step will obviously be to insist on the Council securing from Turkey an absolute and unqualified pledge to accept the decision of the Council in advance. The Turks will probably refuse. In that case the Council can either declare them non-suited and give a verdict in our favour, or postpone the consideration of the case until the Turks come forward of their own accord and announce their readiness to accept a decision, in other words postpone it indefinitely. If the Turks should, however, completely change their attitude by December and accept, we have the alternative possibilities of a majority decision which would certainly be in our favour, and of a unanimous decision. The latter may be so difficult to secure in face of Dr. Undén's attitude that great efforts will undoubtedly be made, in that case, to avert the discredit to the League of a failure to arrive at a decision, and we shall be strongly pressed to find some partial concession or face-saving formula which may bring Dr. Undén into line. That may yet have to be considered, but on the whole I am disposed to think that the point will not be reached, but that we shall either secure a favourable verdict or that the whole question will continue to remain *in statu quo*. As we are in possession this last solution, though not ideal, is good enough to work upon, unless the Turks really mean to declare war and invade Iraq. I do not believe that they are really capable of such an act of suicidal folly, however much they may have bluffed for the benefit of the League and of our cowardly press magnates at home.

The Turkish tactics in this business have, indeed, been based on a bluff which has failed to produce its effect, and which it will be much more difficult to renew successfully three months hence. They have been fundamentally stupid tactics, for they have been throughout calculated to frustrate a decision, a result which can only benefit the party actually in possession. At the same time the instinct which has inspired them may well lead the Turkish Government to prefer to keep their claim to the whole Mosul Vilayet alive *vis-à-vis* their own Grand National Assembly, even if they know that they do not mean to do anything to assert it, rather than to acquiesce in a formal acceptance in advance of a decision of the Council of the League, which they suspect will give them little or nothing.

Administratively, of course, the continuation of a period of delay and uncertainty is regrettable, especially if it is accompanied by a series of irritating minor acts of aggression along the frontier. In this respect, however, the Turks have made the position more difficult for themselves by choosing the actual time of the Council Meeting for a display of their attitude which has enabled us to secure the presence of a League Representative on the frontier and which has, once again, advertised their unfitness to be entrusted with control over a subject Christian population.

On the 12th and 14th September telegrams arrived from Sir Henry Dobbs that the Turks were attacking Christian villages immediately north of the Brussels line, that 260 Christian refugees had arrived at Zakho in a deplorable state of destitution, and that according to them the Turks were deporting all Christians from the Goyan district into the mountains north of the line claimed by His Majesty's Government. The total number of these Christians, who are Roman Catholic Chaldeans and not Assyrians, is about 8,000, of whom it would appear from subsequent telegrams that less than half have been actually deported, the rest having made good their escape into Iraq. He also reported that a small Turkish patrol had crossed the Brussels line and had come into contact with an Iraq army patrol; shots had been exchanged and the Turkish patrol had recrossed the line. I decided that this fresh information, which indicated a renewal of the deliberate policy adopted by the Turkish Government at the time of the Brussels meeting last year, could not be allowed to pass unnoticed. I accordingly informed the Council on the 15th September in an official letter addressed to the Secretary-General. Dr. Rushdy replied on the following day, promising to communicate with his Government and criticising the reports as extremely improbable. His rejoinder was to a large extent counteracted by two telegrams of appeal for help and justice from the refugees themselves, which were addressed direct to the Council on the 16th September. On the 17th September I replied in detail to the Turkish letter, and communicated to the Council the contents of two further telegrams received from the High Commissioner. On the same day Dr. Rushdy in a curt letter to the Secretary-General said that he had received instructions from his Government, and that he was authorised to inform the Council that the allegations of the deportation of Christians in any part of Turkey were absolutely devoid of foundation.

On the evening of the same day I addressed another letter to the Secretary-General, giving further detailed information as to the deportation and ill-treatment

of Christians, and on the 21st September I asked for a special meeting of the Council to be held with the least possible delay in order to consider the correspondence ending with this letter. I suggested in the letter itself that the Council should forthwith despatch to the locality of the Brussels line such representative or representatives as might be required for the purpose of investigating, so far as possible, the charges which had already been made by the two Governments, and of reporting immediately to the Council in the event of any similar occurrence in the future. I added an assurance that His Majesty's Government and the Iraq Government would welcome the presence of such a representative on their side of the Brussels line and would afford him every assistance.

The Council was undoubtedly impressed by the facts presented to them, and at a meeting held on the 24th September presented a report and resolution laying stress on the necessity of avoiding frontier incidents and the spreading of unverifiable allegations pending the reference to The Hague Court, and recommending the appointment of a representative to keep the Council informed of the situation in the locality of the provisional frontier. The resolution did not specifically include any reference to the charges I had brought forward, but I accepted it without criticism, feeling that the essential thing was to get a man on the spot who could not help reporting some of the events of the last few weeks. Dr. Rushdy had originally refused to accept such a representative, or even to attend the Council. But the personal persuasion of M. Loucheur appears to have succeeded in inducing him to make, at any rate, a pretence of not directly defying the Council. In an even more involved speech than usual, he began by accepting the appointment of a representative, stipulating, however, that he should have a Turkish assessor, and that he should enquire "from the military and all other points of view" into the situation at the time of the signature of the Treaty of Lausanne and into all infractions of the *status quo* since July 1923. I thought at first that he was merely adding these conditions to waste time and confuse the immediate issue by bringing forward a mass of charges difficult to deal with after such a lapse of time. But I realised, as he went on to enter upon a long disquisition to the effect that the territory north of the Brussels line was not "disputed territory," and that any question of deportations could only be a minorities question, that he really meant to refuse any investigation on the Turkish side of the frontier, but was in the same breath impudently trying to introduce stipulations into the conduct of any enquiry on our side of the frontier. His efforts to avoid acknowledging this frankly in answer to questions I put to him were so lamentably shuffling as to lead to a general outburst of laughter in the hall. M. Loucheur, who was in the chair, was very much perturbed, and hurriedly closed the discussion.

M. Loucheur spoke to the Turks as the meeting broke up, and came back to me to say that Dr. Rushdy had not really meant to refuse investigation on his side of the frontier outright, but would telegraph for further instructions to Angora. He urged me to stay for another two days in case the answer was conciliatory and justified a further Council meeting. However, in spite of further discussion with Dr. Rushdy, and a lunch with him on the following day, M. Loucheur failed to do more than to draw from Dr. Rushdy before his departure a further letter containing a number of additional stipulations for the conduct of an enquiry south of the frontier, but clearly excluding the Turkish side of the frontier from its purview. In view of this, and of the fact that the Council intended to proceed to the selection of a representative on Monday, the 28th September, I sent a letter to the Secretary-General on the 26th September, just before my departure from Geneva, making it clear that, as long as the enquiry was confined to the Iraq side of the frontier, the details of its conduct were matters to be settled purely between His Majesty's Government and the Council, and that, even if the Turkish Government should change its mind and agree to the conduct of investigations on the Turkish side, there could be no question of a roving investigation into the past and present administration of the Mosul Vilayet, or of anything but an enquiry into the position on the frontier conducted on precisely the same methods and principles on both sides of the frontier and over corresponding areas.

I understand that the Council at its meeting yesterday selected as its chief representative General Laidoner, the Estonian Commander-in-Chief, a distinguished soldier, who has had experience of warfare on the Armenian front, and who can be relied upon to act with firmness and impartiality.

L. S. AMERY.

Downing Street, September 30, 1925.

No. 45.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 2.)*

(No. 121.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Constantinople, October 2, 1925.*

I HAD a very long conversation yesterday with Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs. First part was mainly taken up with a lengthy repetition of arguments that had been exchanged at Geneva. Frontier incidents, he said, were now matters in which small parties of two or three men only were concerned. Of Chatafan affair, about which he had complained to the League the first day of the meeting, he professed to have heard nothing more. He said that the story of deportations of Christians was entirely untrue, for the simple reason that there were no Christians to deport. Moreover, he had some method of disproving positively the story which he was going to produce, but nature of which he did not disclose to me. He expressed regret that Irak authorities allowed themselves to be deceived.

Minister for Foreign Affairs said Turkish Government would not appear before the Permanent Court at The Hague. The argued points to be settled there and decision to be rendered were, he said, matters of no importance; but he gave me to understand that he himself would probably again represent Turkey at December meeting of the Council. These remarks, however, should be read in the light of second part of conversation, for which see my immediately following telegram.

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 50.)

No. 46.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 3.)*

(No. 122.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Constantinople, October 2, 1925.*

MY immediately preceding telegram.

I asked Minister for Foreign Affairs if as regards solution he considered situation better or worse than before or whether things were just the same.

He said that at almost the last meeting at Geneva Secretary of State for the Colonies had said something to the effect that he hoped for a settlement either by decision of the Council or *by agreement*.

This was first suggestion of settlement by direct dealing made at Geneva. He himself had responded in the same meeting, and later, when leaving Geneva, had made a declaration on the subject to the press. (This refers to statement to "Daily Mail" correspondent to the effect that on returning here he intended to discuss frontier question with me.) As to action by Council, he said that a decision satisfactory or unsatisfactory to both sides alike would constitute a practical solution, but a decision that would leave all the dissatisfaction to one party could not be regarded as a solution possible of acceptance. A decision in favour of Brussels line would be precisely of this description. Speaking personally and unofficially, he hoped for a settlement by diplomatic discussion. He could [? omitted: not] be expected to make a real issue from procedure before Council, where argument answered argument and speeches had to follow hot on each other. The two Governments had not yet really considered if they [? omitted: could] settle the matter between themselves, and the Constantinople Conference had been little more than fulfilment of a prescribed formality and had been surrounded by an atmosphere of unreality.

He would like discussions to be pursued either in London or here, but preferably here; but he strongly emphasised that he was speaking for himself only and that he had not consulted his Government. He begged me to keep the matter strictly secret, and said that nothing could be done for some days.

At another point, however, he said initiative must be shared, and suggested that he himself had now made sufficient advances. I expect he has not yet definitely made up his mind as to procedure.

Only indication given of what he wanted as frontier was (1) a vigorous assertion that possession of Mosul town was absolutely essential for Turkey's security; and (2) reminder that he had offered to give up Diala with zone of 100 kilom. round it, coupled with pact for security, disarmament, tariffs, &c. Possibly, however, these were not meant as indications.

I thought it well to say as little as possible, and, indeed, had hardly any occasion to say anything at all. I confined myself to remarking that I personally would be most happy if I could contribute anything towards a settlement.

Minister for Foreign Affairs has apparently realised that Turkey is unlikely to get from the League anything more than the Brussels line. He is most anxious to get more, and hopes that His Majesty's Government will give it for possible prospect of having a peaceful frontier.

It also seems safe to assume that all the truculent gestures of last few weeks have so far been pure bluff.

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 51.)

No. 47.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 4.)*

(No. 123.)

(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 126.

Press has, if anything, been rather quieter lately, but there is rather more tension in the town and French Ambassador, for instance, is quietly panicky. But where Turkish Embassy talks in one sense and Minister for Foreign Affairs in the opposite (see my telegram No. 121), it is difficult to avoid reaching one's conclusion except on general grounds; and though empirical reasoning may be dangerous, I have been unable to persuade myself that Turks are willing to have a breach with us now.

It is, I suppose, conceivable that Minister for Foreign Affairs in his conversation with me was throwing dust in my eyes and trying to lull our suspicions for a few days while Turkish Government completes preparations for an actual attack on Irak. But if this were so, it is inconceivable to me that such an excitable and self-important man as he should stay [? twenty-two] days in Constantinople on his way back to Angora as he is doing.

I will report any information I can obtain about Russian activity.

No. 48.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 6.)*

(No. 47.)

(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, October 6, 1925.

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Forty-first Infantry and 14th Cavalry Divisions reported moving to Irak front."

(Repeated to Bagdad.)

No. 49.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 7.)*

(No. 125.)

(Telegraphic.)

Constantinople, October 6, 1925.

MY telegram No. 123.

Marked *détente* is observable in the press. There has been little comment on Mosul question of the kind prevalent hitherto, and, on the other hand, papers are full of statements that direct [? negotiations] are about to open. These must have been inspired by Minister for Foreign Affairs, as nothing in this sense has been given by this Embassy.

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 52.)

No. 50.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Consul-General Satow (Beirut).*

(No. 18.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, October 8, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 47 of 6th October: Turkish troop movements.

Please telegraph source of report and your observations as to its reliability.

No. 51.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 10.)*

(Unnumbered.)

(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, October 10, 1925.

FOLLOWING for Air Ministry from liaison officer:—

"Movement of 14th Cavalry Division towards Mosul front confirmed by French from several sources. Movement of 41st Division reported by Turkish deserters and needs confirmation."

(Repeated to Bagdad.)

[E 6195/32/65]

No. 52.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 12.)*

(No. 749.)

Sir,

Constantinople, October 4, 1925.

HERR NADOLNY, the German Ambassador, called on me to-day, apparently in a state of some distress, to ask me a question in an entirely personal manner, to which he begged me, if possible, to give him a frank answer: Had I lately complained to you in any way about his general attitude here, or suggested that he was in any way encouraging the Turks to keep a stiff attitude over the Mosul question? He had just been somewhat taken to task by a telegram from the Berlin Foreign Office, to whom it had been suggested that some dissatisfaction over his behaviour here had been expressed. I thought it best to be frank with him, and said that the only mention I had made of him in my recent reports to you was contained in a single phrase of not more than half a line of typewriting. I had repeated to you statements made to me by a certain person, to the effect that the Russians were using all their influence to envenom Anglo-Turkish relations, and that he, Herr Nadolny, was helping them, to which I had added the comment that I did not believe it (see my despatch No. 660 of the 25th August, paragraph 4). That, I said, was all I had written, and it was all my opinion on the subject. If it was this sentence which directly or indirectly was causing him trouble with his Foreign Office, I should feel inclined to regret having written it. I, of course, refused to tell him who it was who had been speaking to me.

2. Herr Nadolny thanked me for speaking to him frankly, and then launched into an explanation of the difficulties of his position here, having to keep on good terms alike with the British, the Turks and the Russians. He assured me most emphatically that he never had incited the Turks against us, and, on the contrary, any influence he possessed would be exerted in the opposite sense, because any sort of a breach between the Turkish and British Governments would affect relations between Great Britain and France, and instantly the German Government would have difficulties on their western frontier. All that the German Government wanted, therefore, was that the Mosul question should be settled peaceably and as quickly as possible. I have no reason to doubt Herr Nadolny's assurances.

3. The conversation then turned on the Mosul question, and he began trying to persuade me that the town of Mosul was not in the least necessary to Irak, and that as the price of peace, and in order to keep Turkey out of the arms of Russia, we would do well to let them have some such line as the Lesser Zab. He went on for quite a time, and it suddenly occurred to me that he was playing precisely the opening he had practised once before on me about a year ago, when our relations with Angora were very strained indeed (my despatch No. 768 of the 14th October, 1924), and I accepted the gambit in the same manner. My experience was, I said,

that in these matters His Majesty's Government were apt to keep a surprisingly stiff upper lip. If the Turks wanted to throw themselves into the arms of Russia, let them do it, and in a very short time they would be struggling to get out again. What did the Turks want with more Kurds and, *a fortiori*, with more Arabs within their frontiers? Why should His Majesty's Government accept a bad frontier line which the Turks would not respect loyally under any circumstances? Their propagandists would penetrate anything but a line of impassable mountains, so let's have our frontier in the very heart of the Hakkari country and then hope for peace and decent relations.

4. A year ago when Herr Nadolny talked to me in this sense I thought he was sounding me out on behalf of someone else—presumably the Turkish Government. On meditating over what he has said to me to-day, I rather prefer the conclusion that he was pressing also on me, and quite legitimately, those counsels of moderation which, as he says, he always tries to press on the Turks; if so, I hope he will do it more convincingly with them, for he made out a sorry case for the separation of Mosul town from Irak.

I have, &c.  
R. C. LINDSAY.

[E 6201/32/65]

No. 53.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 12.)*

(No. 758. Confidential.)

Sir,  
Constantinople, October 6, 1925.  
I HAD the honour in my two telegrams, Nos. 121 and 122 of the 2nd instant, to report the substance of what Tewfik Rushdi Bey had said to me the day before about the Irak frontier question, and when I remember that the conversation lasted a good hour and a half, during which his Excellency talked almost incessantly, even I feel surprised at having nothing further to report than is set forth in those telegrams. I have, however, heard of two other conversations which Tewfik Rushdi had at about the same time.

2. He asked the Persian Ambassador to call on him, and gave him, too, a long account of what had passed at Geneva. He told Sadik Khan of the proposal he had put forward for a security pact, but he did not define his ideas on the subject in any detail; he did not ask the Ambassador for his views or suggest that he should ascertain those of the Persian Government. Sadik Khan does not think that he is conducting any negotiations on the subject at Tehran, and came to the conclusion that Tewfik Rushdi was not serious; that the whole thing was mere propaganda, and not worth telegraphing about to his Government. Tewfik Rushdi also gave the Ambassador a curious bit of information. He said that during the Geneva Conference he and Mr. Amery had been very violently opposed to each other, and had exchanged many shrewd blows; yet, just as the end was coming, they had met and had a conversation in friendly manner. He had succeeded in persuading Mr. Amery that, apart from what was reasonably necessary to her for her security, Turkey was inspired by no aggressive ideas, so that the end of the conference came in a good atmosphere with the ground favourably prepared for direct negotiation. And yet, only a few hours before, Tewfik Rushdi had told me that he had not exchanged a single word with Mr. Amery outside the conference room! It is useless to expect literal accuracy from Tewfik Rushdi, but it may be noted that he gave the Persian Ambassador the impression that all would now go well in the matter of Mosul.

3. A few hours later he received M. Gentizon, the local correspondent of the Paris "Temps," to whom he gave an interview. This interview Tewfik Rushdi corrected and revised, and it should have appeared in the Paris issue of the 3rd or 4th October as the utterances of a "prominent Turkish personality." I have not seen the article, but I am told it is somewhat as follows: Other Powers have their ambitions mainly in Africa, but only England pursues hers undeviatingly in Asia. Her aim is to secure to herself "the three B's," viz., Basra, Bagdad and Baku, and it behoves the Powers affected (presumably France and Persia, as well as Turkey and Russia) to see that their interests are not menaced.

4. My own conversation with Tewfik Rushdi took place on Thursday evening, and one newspaper the very next morning had the news that much importance was attached to the interview, and that it was expected that direct negotiation would now

take place. Since then the same note has been struck by almost the entire press, and it is generally said that I may be expected to go to Angora almost at once to open discussions. At the same time, apart from these news items, Mosul has vanished from the editorial columns quite completely. The press occupies itself with the hat movement, with patriotic celebrations, with the quarrel between Yunous Nadi and Emin Bey, the Prefect of Constantinople, but on Mosul there is no comment at all. The Turkish Government is dispersed over the whole country. The Ghazi is at Brussa, Rejeb (War) at Constantinople, Hassan (Finance) just about to return to Angora, Fevzi (Chief of the Staff) at Smyrna, Ali Jenani (Commerce) at Adana, Jemil (Interior) said to be coming here immediately. I am more bewildered by this sudden and peculiar calm than ever I was by all the tub thumping of the past six weeks.

5. I had been thinking of paying a visit to Angora in these days, but it seems to me that if I were to do so now I should merely give rise to the impression, probably erroneous, that His Majesty's Government, impressed by the agitations of the passed six weeks, were welcoming the idea of direct negotiations with a view to abating their claims to Mosul. Perhaps if the Turks wish for direct discussion, they had better themselves take some more active step than they have hitherto taken to ascertain the wishes of His Majesty's Government, and I had better await the developments of the next few days before doing anything at all.

I have, &c.  
R. C. LINDSAY.

No. 54.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Consul London (Geneva).*

(No. 242.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.  
Foreign Office, October 12, 1925.

FOLLOWING for secretary-general of League of Nations:—

"Reuter's Paris correspondent has reported that General Laidoner, League Commissioner for Irak frontier district, was leaving Paris for Bagdad on 11th October. In order that due facilities and assistance may be given to General Laidoner by Irak authorities, His Majesty's Government will be grateful if they may be informed as soon as possible of: (1) exact scope of general's instructions from Council of League, and probable duration of his mission; (2) numbers and ranks of persons accompanying him, and particulars of accommodation required; and (3) route by which he will proceed to Irak and probable date of his arrival."

No. 55.

*Secretary-General, League of Nations (Geneva), to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received October 13.)*

(Unnumbered.)  
(Telegraphic.) *En clair.*  
Geneva, October 13, 1925.

QUESTION of Irak-Turkish frontier.

Your telegram No. 242 received from British consul.

General Laidoner and party leave Marseilles, 13th October, and will travel by motor route from Beirut, arriving at destination about last week in October. Laidoner will inform British High Commissioner of Irak exact date of arrival at Bagdad. In addition, Laidoner mission consists of Señor Ortéma, Spanish Diplomatic Service, former dragoman, Colonel Jac, Czechoslovak army, as assistants; M. Markus, Estonian Diplomatic Service, and Signor Charrere, secretariat of League, as secretaries. Letter follows regarding instructions from Council and probable duration of mission.

[E 6314/32/65]

No. 56.

*Permanent Court of International Justice to Foreign Office.—(Received October 15.)*

Sir,

*The Hague, October 13, 1925.*

WITH reference to earlier correspondence concerning the questions submitted to the court for an advisory opinion under the resolution by the Council of the League of Nations of the 19th September last, I have the honour to bring to your knowledge that I have received the following two telegrams concerning the attitude of the Turkish Government in this matter, dated the 8th and 12th October respectively:—

(1.)

*Telegram from the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Registrar, dated October 8, 1925.*

"Ai l'honneur vous accuser réception votre télégramme 26 septembre. Gouvernement turc, tout en professant la plus haute estime et déférence vis-à-vis Cour Justice internationale, comme il a eu occasion la faire entendre dans maintes circonstances, a conviction que questions mentionnées dans requête Conseil Société Nations datée 19 septembre, et au sujet desquelles avis consultatif Cour a été demandé, présente caractère nettement politique, qui, de l'avis Gouvernement République, ne peuvent donner matière à interprétation juridique. Pouvoirs conférés Conseil dans différend Mossoul en vertu rédaction définitive article 3 Traité Lausanne et déclarations intérieures feu Lord Curzon qui ont motivé l'adoption par Turquie dit article excluent toute possibilité d'un arbitrage. Par ailleurs, le fait que Conseil a cru devoir lui-même demander avis consultatif Cour sur nature pouvoirs qu'il détient article 3 précité met en évidence justice point de vue mon Gouvernement. De son côté, représentant britannique, ayant déclaré par-devant Conseil qu'engagements antérieurs pris sur ce point par son Gouvernement avaient perdu toute validité, intention ainsi manifestée officiellement a résolu question, sur laquelle aucun doute ne pouvait d'ailleurs subsister. Crois devoir signaler attention Cour que mon Gouvernement a de même clairement et suffisamment exprimé sa manière envisager question concernant requête présentée par Conseil ainsi que sa compétence. Aussi mon Gouvernement pense-t-il qu'il n'y a pas lieu pour lui se faire représenter dans session extraordinaire Cour qui aura à délibérer sur requête susvisée, ayant déjà fait connaître son opinion à ce sujet. Vous prie donner Cour connaissance de ce qui précède.—Ministre Affaires étrangères, Turquie, TEWFIK RUSCHDI."

(2.)

*Telegram from the Secretary-General of the League of Nations to the Registrar, dated October 12, 1925.*

"Viens de recevoir télégramme suivant :

"Reçu lettre 26 septembre. Actes conférence Lausanne ont été imprimés sous rubriques première et deuxième séries, la première contenant premier, second, troisième et quatrième volumes, dont premier porte mention secret. Deuxième série se compose deux tomes, le deuxième formant traité proprement dit avec actes annexes. Tous ces actes ont été directement expédiés adresse Greffier Intercourt La Haye, en double exemplaire. Livre rouge publié par Gouvernement turc contenant dans pages cent quatre-vingts à deux cents procès-verbaux conférence Constantinople. Deux exemplaires livres rouge ont également été adressés directement La Haye sous pli recommandé. Vous serai obligé vouloir bien en aviser Cour.—Ministre Affaires étrangères, Turquie, TEWFIK ROUSCHDI."

I have, &amp;c.

HAMMARSKJOLD, Registrar.

"DRUMMOND."

[E 6367/32/65]

No. 57.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 19.)*

(No. 766.)

Sir,

*Constantinople, October 10, 1925.*

WITH reference to my telegrams Nos. 121 and 122 of the 2nd October regarding the Irak frontier question, I have the honour to report that I called to-day on the Turkish delegate of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. We dealt with some current business, and after it was over, as he had previously asked me whether I was shortly going to Angora, as reported in the press, I said to him that I was in some doubt as to what to do. I had seen Tewfik Rushdi Bey when he passed through Constantinople a week ago, and his Excellency had then spoken to me about the possibility of treating the frontier question by direct discussion, either here in Constantinople or possibly through Ferid Bey in London. At the same time he had emphasised the fact that he was speaking for himself only and that he had not yet consulted his Government, so that nothing could be done at once and I must keep the matter strictly secret for the time being. This, I told Nusret Bey, I had done, but in the meanwhile the Constantinople press was full of talk of direct discussion and were constantly saying that I was going to Angora for the purpose. I had indeed had some idea before these developments arose of paying a visit to the capital; but being now in ignorance as to whether anything was being done either at London or at Angora about the matter or how either Government would view the idea of direct discussions, I felt that by going to Angora I should possibly merely give rise to erroneous impressions and that I had best do nothing at all. At the same time I told him that I did not at all look forward myself to the prospect of direct negotiations, as I could not conceive of any frontier line on which the two parties could voluntarily come to agreement.

2. Nusret Bey listened to my communication, on which, however, he had no observations to make.

3. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's High Commissioner for Irak.

I have, &amp;c.

R. C. LINDSAY.

[E 6370/32/65]

No. 58.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 19.)*

(No. 772. Confidential.)

Sir,

*Constantinople, October 13, 1925.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 758 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to report that there is still remarkably little comment in the press about the Irak frontier question and hardly any editorial comment has appeared; on the other hand, a good many rather mischievous statements continue to be reproduced from the English press calculated to make the public think that the opposition in England to any control over Irak will compel His Majesty's Government to yield to Turkish claims.

2. Mr. Eric Whittall, who lives at Smyrna, tells me that Rahmi Bey (the Union and Progress man and ex-Vali of the town) has recently spent a fortnight here. He is, of course, by no means in good odour with the present Government, but he has many friends with whom he had discussed the Mosul question. He had returned to Smyrna with the conviction that the Turkish authorities might blow trumpets and beat drums and repudiate Fethi's assurances of last October and push things to the very edge of the precipice, but they would not make war on England. I think this is a genuine expression of opinion.

3. The Austrian Minister told me this morning that when he saw Tewfik Rushdi Bey on the 1st or 2nd October he had suggested to his Excellency that perhaps the two parties to the dispute might now come to terms by direct negotiation. Rushdi Bey had answered that he had already at Geneva taken the first step in this direction (M. Kraal thinks that by this he meant his proposal for a security pact, &c.), and that now it was the turn of the other party to make a move. It had occurred to me

that Angora might think that His Majesty's Government would take the next step, and it was with a view to instilling in their minds some doubt on the point that I spoke to Nusret Bey on the 10th instant in the manner reported in my despatch No. 766 of that date.

4. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's High Commissioner for Irak.

I have, &c.  
R. C. LINDSAY.

No. 59.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 21.)*

(No. 53.)

(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, October 20, 1925.

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Colonel Andrea now commanding Jebel Druse column, which is forming new base at Bosra. Gamelin commanding Damascus, where situation serious. Rebels occupying southern and French northern half of town. Paris have authorised passage of 600 Turkish troops through Syria provided no arms accompany them. Authority for 6,000 to pass now asked for, which Turks assert are recruits to replace troops in Kurdistan. Authority for latter not yet granted.

(Repeated to Bagdad and Palestine.)

No. 60.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 22.)*

(No. 54.)

(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, October 22, 1925.

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Situation at Damascus in hand. Before authorising passage of 6,000 Turks, I understand Paris endeavouring to obtain assurance that equal numbers will return [?westwards]. Passage of important material is reported in French summary. (*Vide* summary 87, p. 6.) Am pressing French for greater details. No information of movements by road."

(Repeated to Bagdad.)

[E 6485/32/65]

No. 61.

*Air Ministry to Air Officer Commanding, Bagdad.—(Communicated to Foreign Office, October 23.)*

(Secret.)

(Telegraphic.) P

London, October 22, 1925.

THE Government have come to the conclusion that it is highly improbable that the Turks will carry out an organised attack on Mosul before the League gives its decision in December. It is considered further that there is little likelihood of a Turkish attack between now and March, as weather conditions prevailing between December and March will render operations on a large scale difficult.

2. The Government realise the possibility of a surprise attack with cavalry or infantry being made by some irresponsible leader, and a close watch must be kept on the situation. However, it is considered that the Turks will be deterred from violating the Brussels line by the presence of the League of Nations Commission on the frontier.

3. His Majesty's Government desire that you will do all in your power to avoid becoming involved in consequence of any minor frontier incident, and that only in circumstances which make it clear that the aggression comes from the Turkish side will you take forcible action.

4. Should the Turks, however, definitely invade Irak territory with an organised force, you are authorised to take what action against the advancing troops you think necessary, and also against any Turkish centres of concentration within reasonable reach of your aircraft if, in your judgment, the situation demands it.

5. There will probably be considerable reluctance to sending reinforcements from India, owing to political considerations. Our policy is to retain Mosul without involving ourselves in ground operations against superior forces. You would therefore have to rely mainly on air action, as you did a year ago, and base your plans on the existing force, at any rate for the first month. It is fully realised that you may be forced to withdraw from Mosul in face of a heavy organised attack.

6. The possibility is being considered of delaying the withdrawal of the British and Indian battalions, due for relief in November and February respectively, with a view to strengthening your garrison until the situation becomes more settled. This arrangement will, it is hoped, make a call for immediate reinforcements less urgent.

7. The Colonial Office also are cabling on these lines to the High Commissioner and instructing as to your relations with the League of Nations Commission.

[E 6635/32/65]

No. 62.

*Memoranda respecting the Irak Frontier Dispute.*

1.

AN ATTEMPT TO ESTIMATE THE CONSIDERATIONS THAT WILL INFLUENCE OR DECIDE TURKISH POLICY IN THE QUESTION OF MOSUL. General.

For all practical purposes Mustafa Kemal is both the Turkish Government and Turkey. He is a practical idealist and a constructive patriot with far-reaching ambitions which have already attained a considerable degree of realisation. His aim is to create a new, modernised, independent Turkish State which will be recognised as an equal by the civilised States of the world. His model is Japan and his methods are those of Mussolini. His difficulties are formidable. The country is impoverished in population and wealth, and poor in commercial and industrial experience and organisation. Politically, it is hardly awakened and unfit, for at least a generation, for the parliamentary self-government which he plans for it. He has few able assistants and is unfortunate in having antagonised several of the men who might have been of greatest assistance to him. He will not tolerate personal or parliamentary opposition. The modern parliamentary system which he established has proved to be premature, and he has assumed an undisguised dictatorship. This has made him enemies and imposed on him the necessity of maintaining his popularity at all costs.

*Political: Internal.*

The question of prestige is the lesser of the two vital considerations governing Kemal's attitude in the Mosul question. In mistaken reliance on the power and authority of the Rothermere-Beaverbrook press he launched the Turkish press, to which he allows less independence even than Mussolini to the Italian, on a campaign which has practically committed him to obtaining Mosul for Turkey. His failure to do so will be a severe blow to his personal prestige at home and abroad. And at home it is manifestly in need of the stimulus of a success, both the large and influential officer class and the mass of the population are chafing under his necessarily autocratic methods and are inclined to ask whether the system of a personal dictatorship, with all its inconveniences, is justified by its results. A complete and confessed failure to fulfil his boasts and promises about Mosul will therefore be a very severe blow, and he may well be regretting the commitment deriving from his unsuccessful bluff at the time of the last meeting of the Council of the League.

A second and more important consideration of internal politics is the question of Kurdistan. Kemal's policy is to assimilate the Kurdish population into the new State of Turkey. The Kurds are essential, both racially and militarily, as breeders of citizens and as defenders of the State. The policy of the Irak Government and of His Majesty's Government, endorsed by the League Commission, is to plant the seeds of autonomy among the Iraki Kurds. The inevitable result is

that the Kurds over the Turkish border, always in a state of effervescence and at present openly rebellious, will be fortified in their resistance to the process of assimilation and sooner or later will claim their right to coalesce with their semi-independent brothers in Irak. This will mean the loss of valuable population and territory to Turkey—a threat which must be averted at all costs. This realisation probably explains the Turkish suggestion of a guarantee of the Turkish and Iraki frontiers, and it might go far to satisfy Kemal if we could in any way guarantee Turkey against this danger. But it is difficult to see how we can do so without betraying the unquestionable rights of the Kurds to national development and ultimate independence.

So much for the considerations of internal policy in Turkey. They are not calculated to facilitate acceptance by Kemal of any award by the Council that does not satisfy the Turkish claim.

#### Political: External.

Kemal undoubtedly looks to the time when the new Turkey will be received into the comity of civilised States, and probably, if it were not for the Mosul question, he would not hesitate to signify Turkey's accession to the League of Nations. For he would realise the value to Turkey of the guarantees contemplated by the Covenant as an insurance against the Russian danger. He would also appreciate the recognition of Turkey by the other members of the League. During the period between the armistice and the signature of the Treaty of Lausanne Turkey enjoyed a fictitious power and importance, largely owing to her skill in exploiting differences between the Allies. Now she stands alone and friendless except for Russia, whose immediate motives and ultimate ambitions are the greatest menace she has to face. No doubt Kemal justly appreciates the value and danger of Russian support. In the past he was able to make good use of this support—political, financial and military—without incurring counter-obligations. It is by no means certain that he could do so again. He is probably acutely conscious of Turkey's loneliness and, equally probably, would go to great lengths to secure a guarantee of Turkish territory by His Majesty's Government. The Locarno meeting has proclaimed the solidarity of a saner Europe, with which Turkey hopes to associate herself, and revealed the isolation and failure of Turkey's only friend and most dangerous enemy, Russia.

#### Financial.

Kemal is aware that Turkey will need foreign capital for the many development schemes which he contemplates. Her credit does not stand high abroad and her needs are probably becoming increasingly urgent. In these circumstances, deliberately to flout the League would inevitably jeopardise her prospects of obtaining loans from the members of the League. Military operations against Irak and Great Britain would throw a further burden on the already overtaxed Turkish exchequer and the expenditure could only be justified by desperate need or by the prospect of assured political and financial results.

On the other hand, it is likely that the hope of securing for Turkey the wealth inherent in the oil deposits of the Mosul Vilayet remains a consideration of great weight.

#### Military.

On the face of it it would seem that Kemal could only be induced to embark on a military venture by the imperative needs of internal politics or by a confident belief that a military bluff would succeed owing to the refusal of opinion in this country to sanction a war with Turkey on behalf of Mosul. For there are cogent arguments against a military adventure, the success of which would inevitably be precarious. While a forced march on the city of Mosul might succeed, it would be another matter to occupy and hold the vilayet; reinforcements would probably be forthcoming from India and elsewhere, the lines of communication would be difficult, and, in the winter months, impossible, the imperfectly pacified and disarmed Kurds would be in the rear of the Turkish forces, the Turkish coast would be vulnerable from the sea and the interior of the country from the air, and the political and financial effects of flouting the League and defying His Majesty's Government would be incalculable.

The deductions from the considerations suggested above (and both premises and deductions are necessarily of an exceptionally speculative nature) would seem to be as follows:—

1. A military adventure would be a policy of desperation and of doubtful success. It would not appear that Kemal's need is immediately

desperate. May the adoption of the policy, therefore, not be regarded as unlikely?

2. An intensification of military bluff is a possibility, or even probability, which must be contemplated and met, if need be, with all firmness.
3. Whether or not combined with 2, a continuation of the policy of obstruction and procrastination by the exploitation or improvisation of legal objections and any other expedients that offer themselves may probably be looked for as long as the game pays.
4. This may be terminated by an eventual climb-down, represented as a reluctant yielding to moral and material *force majeure*, in return for any compensatory and face-saving concessions that can be secured.

Putting aside any possibility of territorial readjustments, it is perhaps not inherently fanciful to suggest that a compromise settlement might be attained, with or without the aid of the League, in return for the following:—

- (a.) Some sort of guarantee against the danger of the loss of Turkish Kurdistan. The obvious suggestion is a guarantee of the Turkish and Iraki frontiers, but it is questionable if we could give this. A frank recognition and discussion of this difficulty might be of value in evolving some expedient.
- (b.) Some face-saving device by which Kemal could justify himself to Turkey. This would have to be based upon some actual or apparent concession by His Majesty's Government and combined with some political compensation involving a personal success for Kemal and a political advantage for Turkey.

We have heard much of the effects that would result from a friendly gesture, though we have hitherto been led to suppose that this was simply another name for submitting to the Turkish claim to Mosul. It may be capable of other interpretation and expression. Politically isolated as she is, and yet aspiring to recognition as a modern civilised State, Turkey should be doubly susceptible to any international courtesy. Uncouth, ill-mannered, aggressive and unreliable, she is at the same time conscious of her isolation and anxious to exchange the sinister patronage of Russia for political friendship and financial support. And, in spite of her mistrust of us, she would probably be glad to see us in the position of her insurance broker and financial backer. But while His Majesty's Government ask nothing better than to live in amity with her, and while British capital could probably be attracted to her industrial development in return for adequate security, we cannot contemplate a reversion to the Victorian policy of guaranteeing Turkey against Russia. The suggestion of any guarantee of Turkish territorial integrity is, therefore, excluded. But might not something in the nature of a spectacular burying of the hatchet be contrived? For example, might not a treaty of friendship and arbitration, combining the maximum of moral implication with the minimum of material commitment, be suggested? The initiative would have to come from His Majesty's Government and the moment carefully chosen. It would unfortunately be useless to propose that Kemal should come to London, whether to discuss Mosul or a treaty, but something might possibly be made of a flattering invitation, conveyance on a British warship, &c. However, in present circumstances, it is perhaps useless to speculate upon such possibilities. We are still too much in the dark in regard to feelings and intentions at Angora. And Sir R. Lindsay can be relied upon to offer suggestions for the friendly gesture that has on various occasions been hinted at, should he consider that the time for it has arrived. It is, however, conceivable that a variation of the policy adopted towards Germany at Locarno might succeed with Turkey.

It would also be useful if His Majesty's Government could give Turkey some assurances in respect of financial assistance, but, pending a settlement of the debt question, this presents considerable difficulty. It is unfortunately too late to offer her a share in the Mosul oil development scheme.

Eastern Department, Foreign Office,  
October 23, 1925.

## II.

## AN APPRECIATION OF THE TURKISH ATTITUDE.

The question has been raised, what action are the Turks likely to take in connection with the Irak frontier question? Will they await the outcome of the impending proceedings at The Hague Court, and the action subsequently taken by the Council of the League of Nations? Or are they likely to embark on aggressive movements against Irak, with a view to create an accomplished fact, as was done by General Zeligowski in the case of Vilna?

Several factors exist which may restrain the Turks from resorting to aggression. In the first place, the winter is coming on and in a few weeks the provisional frontier ("Brussels line") will be well nigh impassable for any considerable bodies of troops with their baggage and ammunition, except in the small non-mountainous section at the western end of the line, where our defensive measures could be concentrated. Secondly, the Turks would have to the rear of their attacking force the region of Turkish Kurdistan, which is still far from completely pacified after the recent rebellion, and has kept a large part of the Turkish army busy throughout the present year. Thirdly, it would not be easy for the Turks, even if they succeeded in pushing their troops forward as far as Mosul town, to maintain the long line of communications with their bases at Jezireh and Diarbekir; for this line runs through a country with a mixed population of Arabs, Kurds, Christians and Turkomans, who would not be unanimous in welcoming the invading force, and the Turks must realise that we have quite sufficient air forces to impede their progress by aerial bombardment.

Apart from these military considerations, there are certain indications of a political nature that the Turkish Government are not anxious to court a serious quarrel or an open breach with us at the present juncture. They have evidently "called off" the violent agitation in the Turkish press which persisted throughout the recent discussions at Geneva; the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs talked hopefully to Sir R. Lindsay at Constantinople (on his way back from Geneva to Angora) about the possibility of a settlement by diplomatic discussion between the two Governments; the Turkish newspapers have since then been full of statements that direct negotiations are about to open; the difficulties of the internal situation in Turkey (Kurdish unrest, financial embarrassment, &c.) are still sufficiently acute to render a breathing space of peaceful progress highly desirable, if not an absolute necessity; and although Russian influence continues to count for much at Angora, the friendship of Moscow is not yet a factor on which the Turks can rely with absolute confidence. It may also be observed that while the Turks have declined to appear before The Hague Court, their message to the court was couched in studiously courteous terms, and they have not taken any step which could be construed as flouting the League or forcing the pace by any flagrant and open violation of the *status quo*—apart from their habitual persecution of Christian minorities on their side of the Brussels line.

On the other hand, it would be a mistake to suppose that all danger of the Turk running amok is now definitely eliminated. Like all dictatorships, the Kemal régime can only subsist on successes; and it seems more than doubtful whether Kemal could survive a complete climb-down from the Turkish claim to the whole Mosul vilayet (possibly excluding the small Diala irrigation region), which he has so long and loudly proclaimed to be an irreducible minimum. It is therefore quite possible that the Turks' motive in adopting a less truculent attitude and mooting the ideas of direct negotiation, of an Anglo-Perso-Turkish Security Pact, &c., is to be found in a belief that these tactics are more likely to secure a settlement favourable to their claims than awaiting an arbitral decision or even a mere mediation by the League Council. Unfortunately, our whole position in Irak is such as to render it impossible for us to make any concession or abatement of our claim, which would save Kemal's face or give him a golden bridge over which he could retreat and justify himself to the Angora Assembly and public opinion.

Eastern Department, Foreign Office,  
October 23, 1925.

## III.

## MEMORANDUM BY THE LEGAL ADVISERS TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

The Council of the League has, acting under the last sentence of article 14\* of the Covenant, requested the Permanent Court of International Justice to give an advisory opinion on the following questions:—

1. What is the character of the decision to be taken by the Council in virtue of article 3, paragraph 2, of the Treaty of Lausanne; is it an arbitral award, a recommendation or a simple mediation?
2. Must the decision be unanimous, or may it be taken by a majority? May the representatives of the interested parties take part in the vote?

It is somewhat misleading to speak of the finding of the Court in such circumstances as a "decision." There is a clear distinction between the determination of a dispute by the Court under the second sentence of article 14 and an advisory opinion under the last sentence. The latter is merely an opinion given to the Council at its request to assist it in dealing with some matter which is before it. As between Turkey and Great Britain, the finding of the Court will not, from a legal point of view, alter the existing situation at all; it is merely a preliminary step in the proceedings of the Council, and it is the final action of the Council for which Turkey and Great Britain have, under article 3 (2) of the Treaty of Lausanne, to wait.

Further, while the opinion of the Court would no doubt be regarded by the Council as authoritative as regards the legal questions submitted to it, it does not necessarily follow that the Council would act upon it any more than an individual necessarily acts upon the advice of the lawyer whom he consults. If the Court were to advise that the Council has the power to give an arbitral decision which is binding on Turkey and Great Britain, the Council would no doubt accept this definition of its powers; but, although it may be hoped that the Council would then be prepared to give such a decision, one cannot be certain that political considerations might not lead it to attempt to effect a settlement by agreement. Similarly, if the Court advised that the arbitral decision could be given by a majority of the Council, the Council would no doubt accept this as a correct statement of the legal position, but it does not necessarily follow that the Council would be prepared to promulgate a decision which was only supported by a bare majority.

For present purposes it will suffice to consider the possible findings of the Court under two heads:—

1. Where the Court holds that the Council has power to give a decision which is binding on the parties, even if it is not accepted by one or both of them.
2. Where the Court holds that no settlement of the frontier question can be effected by the Council unless both parties concur in it.

In the first case, it may, perhaps, be assumed that the Council would ultimately succeed in laying down a frontier line, but, if the Turks continue to maintain their present attitude, it is possible that the tendency of the Council would be to compromise, *i.e.*, to divide the disputed territory. This tendency is more likely to prevail if opinion on the Council is divided; if the Court advises that unanimity (apart from the parties to the dispute) is necessary, a compromise may be the only means of getting a decision at all, while, even if the Court advised that a majority decision would suffice, an appreciable minority might quite likely be in a position to impose a compromise.

If, on the other hand, the Court advises that the consent of the parties is necessary, it would seem that the result must be either a compromise accepted by both parties or no decision, in the sense of a definitive fixing of the frontier, at all. In the latter case, it would seem that the "decision" referred to in article 3 (2) of the Treaty of Lausanne would not have been taken, and consequently that the *status quo* provided for in that paragraph would continue. The result as regards the *status quo* ought to be the same if the Court found that the Council had power to give an arbitral decision without the consent of the parties and the Council gave a decision which Turkey refused to accept, for, as the Turks maintain that the powers of the Council under article 3 (2) do not extend to imposing a frontier upon them, they would in the suggested circumstances be bound to hold that the decision referred

\* The relevant articles will be found in the appendix overleaf.

to in that paragraph had not been given, in which case the *status quo* would have to be maintained.

There remains the question of what the position would be if Turkey were to commit an act of aggression against Irak. This might happen either before the decision of the Council was given, or after a decision had been given which Turkey did not accept, or after the Council had failed to reach a decision.

The normal procedure would be for Great Britain to notify the League of the violation of the *status quo* and of the existence of a dispute between Great Britain and Turkey, and Turkey would be invited under article 17 to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute upon such conditions as the Council might deem just.\*

If Turkey refused the invitation and resorted to war against Great Britain by invading Irak, article 16 would apply and the sanctions provided by that article should be let loose against Turkey.

If Turkey accepted the invitation, the matter would be dealt with in accordance with articles 12 to 15. Acceptance of the invitation by Turkey should involve the cessation of any hostile measure against Irak, because otherwise article 16 would at once apply, since Turkey had accepted membership of the League for the purposes of the dispute.†

The action which the Council would take would depend on the circumstances in which the act of aggression had been committed. If the decision of the Council had not yet been given, Turkey would have violated not only the last paragraph of article 3 (2) of the Treaty of Lausanne, but her undertaking given to the League, and the Council could hardly refuse to call upon Turkey to withdraw her forces pending the League's decision, and if she refused, to apply article 16. If the act of aggression occurred after the Council had given a decision which, according to the opinion of the Court, it was competent to give but which Turkey did not accept, the Council would be bound to stand by its decision as to the frontier and to call upon Turkey to withdraw behind it, and, if Turkey refused, article 16 would again apply. If the act of aggression occurred after the Council had failed to reach a decision, the position would (assuming that it can be successfully argued, as suggested above, that the *status quo* is to continue until such time as the Council finally succeeds in reaching a decision) be the same as in the first of the three cases under consideration, since Turkey would have violated the *status quo*.

In the above observations no attempt has been made to distinguish the present question from an ordinary frontier dispute, on the ground that Great Britain is only concerned in Irak as a mandatory under article 22 of the Covenant. The point is obviously important, but as the position of Great Britain depends not on an ordinary mandate, but on the Council's decision of the 27th September, 1924, accepting the Anglo-Irak Treaty and the British undertakings to the League in connection therewith, the situation is not quite the same as it would be in the case of an attack on an ordinary mandated territory. It seems probable, in any case, that the special position of Great Britain in the matter would result, not so much in any alteration of the procedure by which the League would deal with the matter, as in a greater willingness on the part of the Council to assist a country which may, at any rate to some extent, still be regarded as representing in Irak the interests of the League. It is obvious that this willingness should be increased if it could be shown that Turkey's action amounted to a flouting of the authority of the League, as it would do if it involved either a breach of Turkey's undertaking to the Council to maintain the *status quo* pending its decision, or a refusal to accept a decision which the Permanent Court had held that the Council was entitled to give.

October 23, 1925.

#### APPENDIX.

##### *Articles of the Covenant referred to in Memorandum III.*

###### ARTICLE 11.

Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise the Secretary-General shall on the request of any member of the League forthwith summon a meeting of the Council.

It is also declared to be the friendly right of each member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.

###### ARTICLE 12.

The members of the League agree that if there should arise between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, they will submit the matter either to arbitration or to enquiry by the Council, and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators or the report by the Council.

In any case under this article the award of the arbitrators shall be made within a reasonable time, and the report of the Council shall be made within six months after the submission of the dispute.

###### ARTICLE 13.

The members of the League agree that whenever any dispute shall arise between them which they recognise to be suitable for submission to arbitration and which cannot be satisfactorily settled by diplomacy, they will submit the whole subject-matter to arbitration.

Disputes as to the interpretation of a treaty, as to any question of international law, as to the existence of any fact which if established would constitute a breach of any international obligation, or as to the extent and nature of the reparation to be made for any such breach, are declared to be among those which are generally suitable for submission to arbitration.

For the consideration of any such dispute the court of arbitration to which the case is referred shall be the court agreed on by the parties to the dispute or stipulated in any convention existing between them.

The members of the League agree that they will carry out in full good faith any award that may be rendered and that they will not resort to war against a member of the League which complies therewith. In the event of any failure to carry out such an award, the Council shall propose what steps should be taken to give effect thereto.

###### ARTICLE 14.

The Council shall formulate and submit to the members of the League for adoption plans for the establishment of a Permanent Court of International Justice. The Court shall be competent to hear and determine any dispute of an international character which the parties thereto submit to it. The Court may also give an advisory opinion upon any dispute or question referred to it by the Council or by the Assembly.

###### ARTICLE 15.

If there should arise between members of the League any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, which is not submitted to arbitration as above, the members of the League agree that they will submit the matter to the Council. Any party to the dispute may effect such submission by giving notice of the existence of the dispute to the Secretary-General, who will make all necessary arrangements for a full investigation and consideration thereof.

For this purpose the parties to the dispute will communicate to the Secretary-General, as promptly as possible, statements of their case with all the relevant facts and papers, and the Council may forthwith direct the publication thereof.

\* It would not be so effective to bring the matter to the notice of the League under article 11, because it is held that the powers of the Council under that article are confined to making recommendations.

† Under article 16 it would, following the resolution of the Second Assembly, be the duty of all members of the League, subject to the general initiative of the Council, in the first place to break off diplomatic relations with Turkey, and then progressively to adopt coercive measures against her until she abstained from warlike proceedings.

The Council shall endeavour to effect a settlement of the dispute, and if such efforts are successful a statement shall be made public, giving such facts and explanations regarding the dispute and the terms of settlement thereof as the Council may deem appropriate.

If the dispute is not thus settled, the Council, either unanimously or by a majority vote, shall make and publish a report containing a statement of the facts of the dispute and the recommendations which are deemed just and proper in regard thereto.

Any member of the League represented on the Council may make public a statement of the facts of the dispute and of its conclusions regarding the same.

If a report by the Council is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the members of the League agree that they will not go to war with any party to the dispute which complies with the recommendations of the report.

If the Council fails to reach a report which is unanimously agreed to by the members thereof, other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute, the members of the League reserve to themselves the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice.

If the dispute between the parties is claimed by one of them, and is found by the Council to arise out of a matter which by international law is solely within the domestic jurisdiction of that party, the Council shall so report, and shall make no recommendation as to its settlement.

The Council may in any case under this article refer the dispute to the Assembly. The dispute shall be so referred at the request of either party to the dispute, provided that such request be made within fourteen days after the submission of the dispute to the Council.

In any case referred to the Assembly, all the provisions of this article and of article 12 relating to the action and powers of the Council shall apply to the action and powers of the Assembly, provided that a report made by the Assembly, if concurred in by the representatives of those members of the League represented on the Council and of a majority of the other members of the League, exclusive in each case of the representatives of the parties to the dispute, shall have the same force as a report by the Council concurred in by all the members thereof other than the representatives of one or more of the parties to the dispute.

#### ARTICLE 16.

Should any member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants under articles 12, 13 or 15, it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a member of the League or not.

It shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League.

The members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under this article, in order to minimise the loss and inconvenience resulting from the above measures, and that they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the covenant-breaking State, and that they will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the members of the League which are co-operating to protect the covenants of the League.

Any member of the League which has violated any covenant of the League may be declared to be no longer a member of the League by a vote of the Council concurred in by the representatives of all the other members of the League represented thereon.

#### ARTICLE 17.

In the event of a dispute between a member of the League and a State which is not a member of the League, or between States not members of the League, the State or States not members of the League shall be invited to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute, upon such conditions as

the Council may deem just. If such invitation is accepted, the provisions of articles 12 to 16 inclusive shall be applied with such modifications as may be deemed necessary by the Council.

Upon such invitation being given the Council shall immediately institute an enquiry into the circumstances of the dispute and recommend such action as may seem best and most effectual in the circumstances.

If a State so invited shall refuse to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute, and shall resort to war against a member of the League, the provisions of article 16 shall be applicable as against the State taking such action.

If both parties to the dispute when so invited refuse to accept the obligations of membership in the League for the purposes of such dispute, the Council may take such measures and make such recommendations as will prevent hostilities and will result in the settlement of the dispute.

#### ARTICLE 22.

To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position, can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as mandatories on behalf of the League.

The character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances.

Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory.

Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience or religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other members of the League.

There are territories, such as South-West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the mandatory as integral portions of its territory, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.

In every case of mandate, the mandatory shall render to the Council an annual report in reference to the territory committed to its charge.

The degree of authority, control, or administration to be exercised by the mandatory shall, if not previously agreed upon by the members of the League, be explicitly defined in each case by the Council.

A permanent commission shall be constituted to receive and examine the annual reports of the mandatories and to advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the mandates.

[E 6551/32/65]

No. 63.

*Air Officer Commanding, Irak, to Air Ministry.—(Communicated by Air Ministry, October 25.)*

(Secret.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

October 10, 1925.

X 7578 25/10 reference A.M. 428A of 22/10. In an emergency the free hand given in this cable will be of greatest value. It is considered that, if the Turks are treated firmly from the beginning of any hostile demonstration, they will not go as far as war. The wish of His Majesty's Government that extreme measures will be taken only in case of a real emergency is entirely understood.

[E 6527/175/44]

No. 64.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 26.)*

(No. 785.)

Sir,

Constantinople, October 16, 1925.

TURKS are never tired of saying that Mosul is the only stumbling-block in the path towards Anglo-Turkish friendship, and the statement contains more truth than is usually to be found in parrot cries. There is a very fair prospect that for some years to come general conditions of international politics will be favourable for a return to relations of confidence and even cordiality between Great Britain and Turkey.

Russia.

2. In spite of favours and sympathy received since 1920, in spite of the close relations of the present day, Turkey is quite conscious of intense Russian activity towards the south, and making allowance for changes of mottoes and battle-cries, finds that there is an unpleasant similarity between the policy of the Soviet Union and that of the old empire. The future holds out little or no prospect of alleviation, for Russian political thought can hardly be expected to move to the left, whereas it may well move to the right; and if the ostensible internationalism of to-day disappears, it can only be replaced by the open acquisitiveness of a former age. Nor is this all; the eclipse of Germany and the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire have *pro tanto* removed two healthy checks on the Russian appetite, especially where Turkey is concerned.

Great Britain.

3. Similarly, Great Britain's relationship to Turkey should revert to something like what it was in a past age, and from Constantinople to Vladivostok the outlook of British agents is already that of their remoter predecessors. It is the Empire's interest to prop up a whole row of buffer States, and these States, of course with infinite tergiversations, blackmail, and playing off of north against south, will nevertheless come to recognise that on their national existence the British influence must exercise a preservative and the Russian a corrosive effect. For Great Britain the attainment of good Anglo-Turkish relations may be the easier because the problem of Christian minorities has assumed far smaller dimensions than it ever had in the past. On the other hand, the need for it is the greater owing to the existence of politico-religious nationalism in India and other Moslem dependencies.

Turkey.

4. Chastened by fifteen years of war, the young Turkish Republic, in common with the rest of the world, looks forward to-day to a breathing-space, and prepares to use it to the utmost advantage. Modernisation is the heart and soul of its policy; nationalism and secularisation are its necessary handmaids. In all that the Turks do there is and will be infinite muddle, and in their ideals there may be a plentiful absence of logic; but their convictions are deep and genuine, and they are pursuing the realisation of them with passion. In the modernisation part of their programme they have the Japanese example before their eyes, and they purpose not only to introduce everything that steam, petrol and electricity can provide, but also to remodel from top to bottom their codes and their administrative and social institutions. Secularisation should not be regarded as a mere outburst of crude

atheism; it is adopted as a deliberate act of State with the purpose of making a programme of modernisation possible of execution; for it has been dinned into their ears by every European writer, and Turks have come to understand that Islam is a strait waistcoat within which reform is doomed to be suffocated. Nationalism came into being years ago, but recent events have made it for the first time a living force in the hearts of the people. It now constitutes the driving power behind the whole programme of the Government. More important still, it provides to the commonalty some substitute for that which is lost through secularisation. The Government's ideal is to have a compact rectangular Anatolian State into which it would welcome with open arms any and every Turkish-speaking peasant in the world. Aliens are not wanted, but Kurds are a necessary evil.

With this programme, the branches of which are indissolubly bound up together, it is hoped to bring Turkey within a few years to such a pitch of strength and prosperity that she will be able to face confidently any menace that may come from north or south. There is no sign at present of any genuine aggressiveness in Turkish foreign policy, and if His Majesty's Government could feel assured on this point as regards the future, it would be to their interest that the Turkish effort should be crowned with success.

Kurdistan.

5. The Kurdish rebellion of last spring was a terrible shock to this policy. There is a nationalism in Kurdistan, but it is Kurdish and not Turkish, and the Turkish nationalism, inculcated by the Government, is too narrow and sectarian in character to reconcile backward Kurds to the unpalatable programme of secularisation. Small wonder that the tribesmen broke into revolt. To reinvoke contentment the Government has applied fiscal reforms (abolition of the tithe), but it feels its whole programme is imperilled by such outbursts, and that it must at any cost suppress Kurdish nationalism; and yet it finds that just across its southern frontier His Majesty's Government proposes to found a sort of Kurdish National Home. This is a direct menace to the very heart of Turkish policy. It is one thing for His Majesty's Government to stand aloof and have as little to do with Turkey as possible; but a very different thing to administer to her a heavy blow right on the mark.

And so we return to the point from which we started—that the Mosul question is the only stumbling-block in the path towards Anglo-Turkish friendship. After the agitations of the past month or two it looks as if the game is fairly in the hands of His Majesty's Government and that they can play it out as they like; but it may be well to remember that more is at stake than a mere frontier line. Perhaps His Majesty's Government are already irretrievably committed to fostering nationalism in Southern Kurdistan; if not, there are strong reasons for wishing that the League will not impose on the mandatory Power any obligation in that direction.

I have sent a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's High Commissioner for Irak.

I have, &amp;c.

R. C. LINDSAY.

[E 6529/32/65]

No. 65.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 26.)*

(No. 787.)

Sir,

Constantinople, October 18, 1925.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 766 of the 10th October, regarding the Irak frontier question, I have the honour to report that on the 16th instant a communiqué was published by the official Agence Anatolie in which it is stated that, contrary to what certain newspapers have said, the Turkish Government, apart from the declarations and offers made by its delegation at Geneva, has made no *démarche*, and no *démarche* has been made to it. The public is thus informed that no direct discussion of the question is in progress. The communiqué has evoked no comment in the Turkish press, and the whole question of the frontier is still hardly mentioned.

2. I was told a short time ago, in secrecy, that the Turkish military authorities were taking care that the officers in positions of authority on the frontier should all be men who could be trusted to obey orders and to abstain from adventures. This is confirmed both by what Tewfik Rushdi said to me on the 1st October (that frontier affairs now were merely matters of two or three men crossing the line) and by the intelligence forwarded by Sir H. Dobbs, e.g., the return of deported Christians to their villages, and the reprimand of the Turkish Commandant Hakkı Bey. I should imagine that Angora has established a firm control over its frontier officers; but the Irak authorities can probably judge better than I.

3. I have sent a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's High Commissioner for Irak.

I have, &c.  
R. C. LINDSAY.

No. 66.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 26.)*

(No. 55.) (Telegraphic.) *Beirut, October 26, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer:—

"Paris have instructed that two trains be allowed to pass eastwards at a time. These trains must be replaced by two westward-bound troop trains before next pair be allowed to pass eastwards. High Commissioner has now appointed Carbillet to Headquarters Intelligence Staff. Comment of French and natives extremely unfavourable."

(Sent to Air Ministry. Repeated to Bagdad and Palestine.)

No. 67.

*Consul, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 27.)*

(No. 56.) (Telegraphic.) *Beirut, October 27, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Unconfirmed reports state that 14,000 troops and twenty-five aeroplanes are at Mardin and 6,000 troops at Jezirat. More reliable reports state that Turks are assembling sixty aeroplanes at Diarbekir. M. Painlevé's assistant private secretary here."

(Repeated to Bagdad.)

No. 68.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 31.)*

(No. 57.) (Telegraphic.) *Beirut, October 31, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Strong rumour emanating from Turkish consulate states that Turks intend attacking Mosul within a few days. I mention this for what it is worth."

(Repeated to Bagdad.)

[E 6775/2/65]

No. 69.

*Secretary of State for the Colonies to the High Commissioner for Irak.*

(Secret.) (Telegraphic.) P.

*Downing Street, November 2, 1925.*

YOU will realise that in the event of aggressive action on the part of the Turks and resultant necessity for taking forcible action in defence of the frontiers of Irak, it is of the utmost importance that His Majesty's Government should have the moral support of the League of Nations. For this purpose it is necessary that the League should be fully satisfied it is with the Turkish Government and not with His Majesty's Government that initial responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities rests. The support and approval of the League would be of particular importance in the event of the situation developing in such a way as to render it necessary to take action against Turkey outside Irak. It is necessary, therefore, that, in the event of any act of Turkish aggression, or of any incident likely to lead to outbreak of hostilities, General Laidoner should be kept in closest touch with events, and should be given every facility to report the facts fully and without loss of time to the League of Nations. You should treat him with utmost frankness, but beyond furnishing him with all the relevant evidence available no attempt should be made to influence his judgment or the nature of his reports to the League. Nothing should be done that could give colour to suggestion that General Laidoner was acting merely as mouthpiece of British authorities. In the event of defensive action against Turkish encroachment becoming necessary, you should, so far as military exigencies allow, keep Laidoner promptly informed of measures taken and ensure that necessity for them is fully explained to him. You should, of course, act throughout in consultation with Air Officer Commanding, to whom a copy of this telegram should be communicated.

This is in continuation of my telegram of the 27th October.—AMERY.

No. 70.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Lindsay (Constantinople).*

(No. 133.) (Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, November 2, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 122 of 2nd October and your despatch No. 766 of 10th October: Irak frontier question.

His Majesty's Government do not consider that anything new has occurred to justify change from policy followed hitherto of declining to entertain Turkish suggestions of direct negotiations. Decision now lies with Council of League. Departure from present policy would not only be regarded at this juncture as act of discourtesy to League, but would be unlikely to serve any useful purpose, since His Majesty's Government are not prepared to make any territorial concession likely to be acceptable to Turkish Government.

You should be guided by above considerations if Turks broach question again.

There is no foundation for Minister for Foreign Affairs' statement to you that Secretary of State for the Colonies referred at Geneva to possibility of a settlement by agreement between interested parties.

No. 71.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).*

(No. 307.) (Telegraphic.)

[By Bag.]

*Foreign Office, November 2, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 130 to Constantinople of 28th October and Sir R. Lindsay's reply No. 127 of 29th October: Turco-Syrian frontier negotiations.

I am reluctant to believe that the French Government are likely to make concessions to the Turks regarding the use of the Syrian section of the Bagdad Railway in exchange for some territorial or other *quid pro quo*. But you should

watch the situation carefully, and if you see any danger of such concessions being made, make immediate and strong representations to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Any agreement whereby the Turks would be enabled to pass as many troops as they please over the railway would cause His Majesty's Government most serious concern.

[E 6706/32/65]

No. 72.

*Memorandum by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*

M. UNDÉN spoke to me in Paris about the Mosul question. He said that it appeared to him clear that the Council was acting in an arbitrary capacity, but that even though it had the right to impose a decision on the two parties it did not necessarily follow that it would be wise to do so. M. Undén began his discussion of the question by observing that the commission sent to Irak had not made a recommendation to the Council, and had expressly referred, for the consideration of the Council, certain aspects of the question which members of the commission had not considered to come within their sphere. If the commission had had to weigh these larger considerations, their report, said M. Undén, might have borne a different character. This was the impression left upon his mind by conversations which he had had with one of the members of the commission.

This exordium appeared to me obscure. Its practical importance became apparent when M. Undén suggested that it was desirable to find a compromise, and that the commission might usefully invite the two parties to meet and endeavour to reconcile them. I replied by describing to M. Undén what had passed between the Turkish Minister in London and myself in the months of March and April of this year. I told M. Undén that no other basis for a compromise had ever been suggested to me, and I invited him to consider in what light the British Government would appear if it came before the Council with some such language as the following:—

"We have a mandate which constitutes us the guardians and protectors of the young State of Irak. We have had a dispute with the Turkish Government as to what is the boundary of that State, but we have now happily arranged this dispute by selling the interests of Irak in return for economic and financial concessions to citizens of Great Britain. We invite the Council to approve the bargain that we have made."

How, I asked, was it possible to suggest to any self-respecting nation a bargain of this character?

M. Undén suggested that the arrangement should take a different form, and that the frontier of Irak should be drawn upon some unmentioned line dividing Mosul into two parts. I replied that this would counter the clear recommendations of the League's commissioners, that it would correspond neither with the military, ethnical nor economic conditions of the country, and that it was impossible that we should voluntarily be parties to such a proposal.

M. Undén then argued at length that it was more important for the future to have the goodwill of Turkey than to have a strategic frontier. I invited M. Undén to apply his argument to the case of Sweden. What would his feelings be if I argued that, as Russia coveted a part of Sweden and peace would be insecure unless Russia were content, it was desirable that the League should allocate a chunk of Swedish territory to satisfy Russian desires? This was a policy of pure blackmail. M. Undén replied that, as presented by me, the policy was not fairly stated. What he suggested was more comparable to what had happened in the case of the Aaland Islands. After all, the question in the last resort was whether military considerations should prevail over all others.

The discussion, which had been more exhaustive than appears from this brief résumé, was now moving in a circle. I therefore told M. Undén that between him and me there was a difference for which I could offer no solution. I would only observe that if the Council should draw such a line as he suggested, which brought the Turks over the mountains into the plain, there would be war whenever Great Britain withdrew from Irak, be that time five years, twenty-five or fifty years. He would have created a situation in which Irak would be unable to defend itself, and Turkey would be certain to attack at the first favourable opportunity.

M. Guani also spoke to me upon this subject. In view of M. Undén's proposals, which he had been expounding to the committee of the Council, M. Guani was anxious to know what chance, if any, there was of a confrontation of the parties leading to an amicable arrangement of the dispute. I told him what had passed between M. Undén and me, and in particular what had passed in the official correspondence with the Turkish Minister. He thanked me and said that this was of great consequence.

M. Quiñones de León also spoke to me upon the subject, and I promised to communicate officially with the secretary-general, for the information of the Council, copies of the correspondence with the Turkish Minister.

*Foreign Office, November 2, 1925.*

A. C.

No. 73.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 3.)*

(No. 60.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, November 2, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Up to date 3,600 troops have passed eastward in three trains; 500 have passed westward. Train containing 1,200 eastward-bound troops has been detained at Islahie since 26th October and will not be allowed to proceed until further troops pass westward.

(Repeated to Bagdad.)

No. 74.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 5.)*

(No. 61.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, November 5, 1925.*

FOLLOWING for Air Ministry:—

"Following from liaison officer:—

"No further troop movements by rail eastwards or westwards. Turks declare they will move remainder of eastward-bound troops by road. It appears that they have no more troops to transport westwards. Three thousand have therefore passed eastwards without corresponding number passing westwards. Syrian situation: Country infested with rebels and brigands. Gendarmerie incompetent. Two more cavalry regiments and nine more infantry battalions being sent."

(Repeated to Bagdad and Palestine.)

[E 7045/32/65]

No. 75.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 16.)*

(No. 840.)

Sir,

*Constantinople, November 11, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a report from Major R. E. Harenc, military attaché to this Embassy, on the Turkish feeling in regard to Mosul, based on a visit which he has just paid to Angora. I wish, in the first place, to bring out and comment on two points made by Major Harenc in this report.

2. He says that in the Turkish view "if the Kurds are left in Irak, given a certain amount of autonomy, and are treated properly, it will mean continual trouble in Turkey." I have recently made this point to you in my despatch No. 785 of the 16th ultimo, and I feel that I cannot adequately emphasise its importance. I confidently believe that autonomy in South Kurdistan is the head of the Turkish grievance against Great Britain, and that what Turks dread more than anything else is that in the eastern vilayets the young republic may have on its hands just such a distracting and exhausting problem as Macedonia constituted for the declining Ottoman Empire. In such a case well guarded frontiers and abstinence from propaganda by

Irak authorities will afford no relief; for unrest in the Kurdish vilayets would grow from the mere reports of better conditions in Kurdish Irak. I have thrown out the suggestion that the Council of the League, if it were to award us the Brussels line, might be induced to omit from its findings any stipulation as to the grant of autonomy to the Kurds south of that line. I venture to hope that this may be possible. It would not preclude His Majesty's Government from granting autonomy eventually, but it would give them time to look around for some other policy less likely to be permanently detrimental to Anglo-Turkish relations.

3. Major Harenc shows also the importance attached by Turks to the "scuttle" campaign waged in England by the "Daily Mail" and other newspapers. Many Turks, even influential ones, have come to think that they have only to make another Zeligowski coup, take Mosul and dig themselves in, and His Majesty's Government will be prevented by British public opinion from resenting the insult by any active measures. It cannot be denied that these opinions, so widely and confidently held in this country, might distort the judgment even of those who direct the Government.

4. Maybe that in my previous writings I have not sufficiently emphasised the effect here of the yellow press campaign; it was because, while the agitation was in full blast, I knew there was nothing to be done. But it seems to me that the "Daily Mail" campaign has fallen rather flat in England, and, if this is so, I cannot help wondering if something could not now be done to counteract its influence here. The moment would be very opportune. Could a parliamentary question be answered in the following sense:—

"His Majesty's Government have no information to the effect that the Turkish Government contemplate any *coup de main* against Mosul, and the troops they maintain in Irak are only such as would suffice for the prevention of normal disorder. It is hardly necessary to add that, in the case of such an unprovoked aggression as is contemplated in the question, the affair would have far more than mere local importance."

5. If you see fit to make some such declaration in Parliament, may I add some minor recommendations:—

- (a.) The declaration should not be made by Mr. Amery. The principle of Cabinet solidarity is imperfectly understood, and Mr. Amery, whose utterances are frequently reported here, is regarded as an advocate with a licence to say more than his client really means—as oriental advocates always do.
- (b.) No reference should be made to the League of Nations. Possibly if a crisis arose the support or even guidance of the League might help His Majesty's Government with British public opinion—if help were needed; but here in Turkey, while the hostility of His Majesty's Government is justly feared, the League of Nations cuts no ice.
- (c.) The declaration should be broadcasted by Leefield.

6. I now revert to Major Harenc's report, and note that, whereas formerly he thought the Turks were bluffing about Mosul, he has now come to the conclusion that there is no bluff and that they mean to have it, peaceably if possible; by force if necessary. I think Major Harenc may be influenced by certain psychological reactions. I myself was in Constantinople throughout September and witnessed a tremendous Mosul press campaign engineered here obviously by the Turkish authorities, and I saw that campaign shut down completely in forty-eight hours by the same authorities. Major Harenc was away throughout September (I often stood greatly in need of his advice, but I deliberately left him in England, because during what I regarded as a great bluff I would not gratify the Turks by showing even that amount of concern implied by recalling him from leave). Major Harenc now comes in for the backwash, still lively enough, of September's storm, and, naturally enough, he is greatly impressed by the contrast between what he hears now and what he heard last summer. He supports his view by the observation of numerous phenomena of a more or less superficial nature, and not the least of them is one that he has not been able to mention, viz., the enormous credits assigned to the army in the budget for 1926-27 (see my despatch No. D.O.T.(A.)/3 of to-day's date).

7. Now, I have always held that the Turks will not attack us this year or next year, even if the League finds for the Brussels line. In reaching this opinion, I have, I know, often brushed aside hard facts immediately perceptible to the eye, and in the

main I have based my view on the utterances of persons reliable and unbiased and on broad considerations of Turkish policy, both internal and external. Possibly the visit which I am about to pay to Angora may shake the view which I still hold to-day, for I will admit that during the past couple of months I have given many hours' thought to this question, and I have sometimes been assailed by doubts—increased, I daresay, by the sense of responsibility. I trust that you, Sir, will appreciate the difficulties of one who has conceived it to be his duty to forecast the probable action of so enigmatical a body as the Turkish Government, and I will close this despatch with a discouraging quotation from the writings of one of my predecessors:—

"When you wish to know what a Turkish official is likely to do, first consider what it would be his interest to do; next, what any other man would do in similar circumstances; and, thirdly, what everyone expects him to do. When you have ascertained these, you are so far advanced on your road that you may be perfectly certain that he will not adopt any of these courses."

I have, &c.

R. C. LINDSAY.

Enclosure in No. 75.

Major Harenc to Sir R. Lindsay.

Sir,

Constantinople, November 9, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for your Excellency's information, the following appreciation of Turkish intentions regarding Mosul. It is based on the information which I gathered in Angora during the course of conversation with various persons, ranging from an ex-mutessarif and an officer on the staff of the commandant-general of gendarmerie to the American delegate in Angora.

2. The Turks want Mosul quite definitely, and are now prepared, if necessary, to fight for it; but they do not intend to fight until all other means of obtaining it have been proved unavailing.

3. Mosul is wanted by both the thinking and unthinking Turks. The unthinking, because they have been propagandised to such an extent that they believe it part of the fatherland; by the thinking, for three reasons:—

- (a.) That if the Kurds are left in Irak, given a certain amount of autonomy, and are treated properly, it will mean continual trouble with the Kurds in Turkey.
- (b.) That if Mosul is now given up, after making such a point of its retention, it will definitely react against the present Government in general, and against Mustafa Kemal in particular.
- (c.) Rightly or wrongly they consider the Mosul Vilayet as a source of potential wealth.

4. The present concentration in the south-eastern vilayets was originally made to suppress the Kurdish rebellion. Although the Kurds are still giving trouble, the size of the force now there is larger than is required for the operations now in progress, namely, the pursuit of small isolated bands of malcontents and the establishment of the new administration; it is therefore for another purpose.

When the Kurdish rebellion was suppressed, this force was kept in being in the neighbourhood of the Mosul border as a bluff, the underlying idea being that they might, in order to avoid a possible war, possibly frighten the League of Nations into giving a decision favourable to themselves, and at the same time induce that part of public opinion in England which is averse to any expenditure outside England into raising such an outcry on the possibility of war that it would induce the British Government to come to terms with Turkey by direct negotiation. They have not yet succeeded in carrying out the first part of their scheme, nor have they succeeded in making the British Government reopen direct negotiations, but they have, from what they read in papers such as the "Daily Mail," raised a strong feeling in England against incurring any expenditure for the sake of Irak. They have now decided to follow up this partial success, which is, indeed, more than they expected. The presence therefore of the troops in the immediate vicinity of the Mosul Vilayet has now become a threat.

5. Rightly or wrongly, many of those responsible for the policy of Turkey believe that the "Daily Mail" represents the views of the "man in the street" in England, and when a writer like Mr. Garvin agrees with the opinions expressed in the "Daily Mail," they conclude that it is safe to count upon public opinion in England not allowing Imperial forces being used to uphold a decision of the League of Nations, should such decision involve sending troops into Irak to combat any movement made by them in order to occupy the Mosul Vilayet.

6. They are convinced that, should the League of Nations give a decision unfavourable to themselves, they could, without any serious difficulty, establish themselves in Mosul and that once there, for the reasons given in the preceding paragraph, Great Britain would not be able to turn them out. They do not believe that this flouting of a decision given by the League of Nations would prove detrimental to themselves, as Europe is too much concerned with her own affairs to take the matter up. If Greece should take this opportunity to attack them, they have three corps, the 1st, IIIrd and IVth, ready for the defence of the western front, and, should that not be sufficient, Russia is prepared both with men and material to assist them.

7. The force at their disposal for the occupation of the Mosul Vilayet is estimated at between 50,000 and 60,000 men of all arms. It is an open secret that they find great difficulty in keeping the force up to this strength on account of desertion, sickness, &c., the desertions being due to the reluctance of the troops to be kept under active service conditions; consequently, fresh troops have continually to be drafted in; this partially accounts for the recruiting activity in Turkey at this moment. A war against England would be unpopular, and would increase the difficulty of keeping men with the colours; but, in spite of the difficulties involved, the Turks are resolved to march into Mosul should the decision of the League of Nations be unfavourable to them, for they believe that they have all to gain and nothing to lose by such action.

8. The opinion expressed above is quite contrary to that which I have expressed in my previous despatches addressed to your Excellency on this subject. I have been forced to change my opinion, as I feel that there is quite a different atmosphere in Angora now to what there was four months ago.

That the feeling in official circles in Angora with regard to the chances of obtaining hold of the Mosul Vilayet has changed is, in my opinion, almost entirely due to the opinions expressed in certain papers in England, chief amongst which is the "Daily Mail." I do not believe that four months ago the Turkish Government even contemplated regular operations for the possession of the Mosul Vilayet; they would have repeated the tactics which were so successful in 1920 in forcing the French to evacuate Upper Cilicia.

9. Though the Turkish Government is at this moment prepared to send troops to occupy the Mosul Vilayet at any time they see fit, they would not do so if they thought there was any chance of Great Britain taking up such a challenge to her prestige. I consider that there are two methods of bringing about such a belief: the first, if the "Daily Mail" could be induced to change its printed opinions on this question, or if an effective counterblast could be raised; the second, if a force, sufficiently strong to give the Turks at least some difficulty in marching to Mosul, could be sent to Irak before they made any definite move.

I have, &c.  
R. E. HAREN.

## No. 76

*Sir E. Drummond to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 21.)*

(Telegraphic.) *En clair.*

*Geneva, November 21, 1925.*

AFTER consultation with the sub-committee of the Council, the Secretary-General has the honour to forward a telegram received on 17th November from General Laidoner at Mosul:—

"Après enquête sur place ai l'honneur vous donner information suivante sur situation:

"1. Turcs ont effectué déportation chrétiens se trouvant actuellement réfugiés région Zakho et, chaque jour, il en arrive de nouvelles. Selon dépositions faites par réfugiés, force et violence obligèrent habitants quitter villages. Turcs ont commis sur population chrétienne crimes, atrocités, massacres.

Impossible définir vraie cause déportations sans avoir explication côté turc. Avons toutefois pu constater formellement que tous chrétiens furent contraints quitter leurs habitations, car ceux arrivés à Irak sont dépourvus tous moyens subsistance, ayant dû quitter leurs biens entiers dans villages.

"2. Autorités turques avaient pris habitude envoyer village Nuzur postes et patrouilles militaires. Ayant visité Nuzur et autres régions frontières, avons pu constater, façon absolue, que Nuzur se trouve au sud ligne Bruxelles, d'après description cette ligne. Cartes ne sont pas exactes. Autorités britanniques m'ont fait part leur intention installer poste Nuzur. Ai conseillé laisser tous les postes sur position actuelle jusqu'à session Conseil. Me permets vous conseiller inviter, si possible, Turcs à ne pas installer poste militaire, ni envoyer patrouilles, sud ligne Bruxelles pendant même laps de temps. Après reconnaissance personnelle sur place, puis affirmer que villages Sinat, Dershish, Nuzur, Sul, Rusi, Hurki, Arush, visités de temps en temps par patrouilles turques, se trouvent au sud ligne Bruxelles. Ai également pu constater qu'actuellement aucun poste turc ne se trouve sud ligne.

"3. Protestations turques, au sujet survol par avions britanniques dela région nord ligne Bruxelles, peuvent provenir du fait que Turcs considèrent peut-être que ligne passe sud villages nommés ci-dessus, qui sont, en effet, régulièrement survolés par avions britanniques.

"4. Avant que question frontière soit définitivement réglée, mon opinion est que les incidents indiqués sous Nos. 2 et 3 sont inévitables et ne peuvent, par conséquent, influencer adverse façon quelle que soit décision Conseil. Par contre, déportations chrétiennes peuvent avoir suite qui mérite attention Conseil."

## No. 77

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 22.)*

(No. 130.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Constantinople, November 21, 1925.*

I RETURNED yesterday from a visit to Angora.

No suggestion was made to me of any desire to undertake direct negotiations about Irak frontier, and I of course avoided any language that might be construed as inviting them. Conversations were thus rather uninteresting and inconclusive, though entirely friendly in tone. I received plenty of assurances that Turkey harboured no aggressive intentions, and from Prime Minister an admission that Turkish Government have been bluffing, but of so sweeping a character that I am inclined to discount its value and attribute it to his imperfect command of the French language. He informed me most categorically that Kurdish question is the most vital part of the frontier difficulty and constitutes true menace to Turkey's security. He said that, so long as any large number of Kurds are included in Irak, Turkish Government would have perpetual trouble in her eastern provinces, and trouble would arise automatically, however loyally British authorities might act as neighbours.

I took opportunities of warning Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of War that any attempt at *coup de main* against Mosul must lead to difficulties on widest scale.

My impression is that Turkish Government, including Minister for Foreign Affairs, is desirous of keeping the peace, but it is in low spirits over situation into which its policy of the past few months has brought it, and has been disappointed that I had nothing to say. Military class and General Staff may desire violent methods, and decision lies in the hands of the President. I think he will back his Government.

Prime Minister did not disguise his dislike of the Locarno treaties, but his objections to them were of an entirely childish character. True reason of dislike is that, as Turkey has always profited by discord among the Western Powers, so any rapprochement among them *pro tanto* diminishes her chances of getting advantages.

Fuller report by bag.  
(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 54.)

No. 78.

*Sir P. Loraine to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 26.)*(No. 375. Very Confidential.)  
(Telegraphic.)*Tehran, November 25, 1925.*

MINISTER for Foreign Affairs asked me this morning how question of Mosul stood. I acquainted him with ruling of International Tribunal on points submitted to it, and said next step was for Council of League to give an arbitral decision.

His Excellency then proceeded to read to me in personal confidence long extract from confidential report sent him by Persian delegate to League of Nations, reporting interview at Geneva with Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs just before latter departed, presumably towards the end of September. Gist was as follows:—

Tewfik Rushdy Bey said that Turkey would not be represented at Hague Court, and did not regard submission to it of legal points as official; that England knew quite well that population of Mosul Vilayet had expressed desire for union with Turkey, but as she had many friends on League Turkish Government anticipated that latter would give a decision in December unfavourable to Turkey. In that case and on the day decision was announced Turks would cross Irak frontier and drive British out of Bagdad and Basra; they had 50,000 men concentrated near frontier and another 150,000 between Angora and Mosul.

Persian delegate enquired how in those circumstances Turkey would protect her long seaboard against British fleet, and warned Tewfik Rushdy Bey that by embarking on such a policy Turkey would have half the world against her.

Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that all contingencies had been foreseen, precautions had been taken at Constantinople and Smyrna, and whatever damage English did there, Turkey would compensate herself elsewhere. For the rest, Turkey had a secret agreement with Russia, latter undertaking to provide arms, munitions of war and other assistance to Turkey in the event of war with England and to enter war as Turkey's ally if any other State or States joined with Great Britain.

Persian delegate did not report earlier because he wished to see whether Turkey would be represented at The Hague or not. Turkish statement just reported by Reuter's from Constantinople to the effect that decision of The Hague Court overlooks principle of justice seems significant in this connection.

I cannot appreciate importance of this information, but thought it best to report fully.

(Sent to Delhi, No. 131, and Bagdad, No. 199.)

No. 79.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 30.)*(No. 133.)  
(Telegraphic.)*Constantinople, November 29, 1925.*

I HAVE already expressed view that inclusion of any large body of Kurds within final boundary of Irak is real centre of difficulty with Turkey and that this matter is likely in future to constitute permanent obstacle to good Anglo-Turkish relations (see especially my despatch No. 785). Unless this is borne in mind, though we may get a frontier line by decision of the League or otherwise, we shall not get a solution of the question.

Seeking some solution, I venture following suggestion: That we arrange for cession to Persia of all or nearly all mountainous country lying to east of a line drawn from somewhere near Amadia in a south-easterly direction so as to exclude region of Suleimanieh from Irak. Country inhabited by native Christians in north would presumably be left west of the line.

Existence of Kurds in Persia, where their nationalism is not fostered, is not and possibly never will be cause of trouble to Turkish Government, who might perhaps find in this proposal a remedy to the serious part of their grievances (see Prime Minister's remark to me in my telegram No. 130).

I imagine that strategical objections to this line on part of His Majesty's Government would be comparatively insignificant with Persia as neighbour instead of Turkey.

If Turkey had to be bribed to enter into this arrangement it might be possible to let her have northern part of mountainous region, say, down to Rowanduz, where Kurdish inhabitants have their chief affiliations with tribes living in Turkish territory. This might be the more necessary as Turkish Government would have to abandon finally all claim to Mosul town.

It would presumably be necessary to conclude a tripartite agreement with Persia by which latter would undertake not to cede to either Turkey or Irak any part of transferred territory. Turkish Government would doubtless present this as the regional pact of security proposed by Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs at Geneva.

Above is only constructive proposal which I can think of for dealing with a question, which, for Turkey and for future of Anglo-Turkish relations, is of very great importance. In submitting it, I admit to ignorance of important factors, especially probable reactions of Persian and Irak Governments, but I hope it may merit consideration.

[E 7369/32/65]

No. 80.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 30.)*

(No. 864. Confidential.)

Sir,

*Constantinople, November 22, 1925.*

IN my telegram No. 130 of the 21st instant I have already reported briefly the substance of my conversations at Angora with the Turkish Ministers on the subject of the Irak frontier, and I will now furnish you with fuller details, though little passed that was of any great importance.

2. My colleagues at Angora tell me that my visit was looked forward to with considerable interest, but I do not think that Ministers really hoped for much from it. In their view, Tewfik Rushdi's conversation with me of the 1st October (my telegram No. 121 of the 2nd October) was an advance towards direct discussion; the official communiqué reported in my despatch No. 787 of the 18th October showed that they had given up hope that their suggestions would meet with any response, and they can hardly have expected that I should open the subject. Indeed, in accordance with the tenor of your instructions, I avoided anything which could seem to invite direct negotiations. In the first conversation I had with Tewfik Rushdi Bey I did not mention the word "Mosul" to him at all, and he responded by not mentioning it to me. I did not wish to pass over the whole matter in silence with Ismet Pasha, but I had to bring it up myself, and a good deal of talk ensued, most of it the usual sort of thing, with him saying how easy it would be for Great Britain to settle the whole matter out of hand, and with me answering by explaining the elementary principles of the trustee relationship in which we stand to Irak; and so forth, both of us covering old ground.

3. I said to Ismet that, looking at Anglo-Turkish relations in a broad way, one difficulty was that His Majesty's Government could not yet feel convinced that Turkey had abandoned the hope or the wish to recover territories lost in the late war. Ismet Pasha protested that Turkey did not want to acquire any Arab territories. I said that I could not help observing a puzzling contradiction in Turkish policy; on the one hand, Turkey was embarked on a campaign of reconstruction and modernisation, which was clearly very near to his Excellency's and to the Ghazi's hearts; on the other hand, the country and Government never cease to clamour aggressively for the restitution of Mosul, which ethnographically was purely Arab and strategically, I was told, was of no importance whatever for the defence of Anatolia against any menace from the south. These two policies, pursued simultaneously, were contradictory to and destructive of each other; how could His Majesty's Government feel any confidence in Turkish intentions under such circumstances? Ismet took the point up at once. He admitted that Mosul was Arab or mainly Arab, but added that there were "other elements of population in those regions." He emphasised the importance of the reconstruction programme by pointing to the immense sacrifices it was entailing on the country, and by saying that he himself had always publicly stated that it was a work that could not come to

fruition for twenty years. "These two policies," he said, "are, as you remark, contradictory and mutually destructive of each other; the one must be sincere and the other not sincere, and I leave your Excellency to decide for yourself which is which." If words have any meaning, this can only constitute a sweeping admission that the Turkish Government has been bluffing; but, as I can conceive of no reason why the Turkish Prime Minister should make any such admission to me, I incline to attribute the form of Ismet's answer to his imperfect command of French, merely pointing out to you the very sound common-sense that underlies it.

4. At one moment Ismet mentioned to me the opposition that His Majesty's Government were encountering at home to their Irak policy; I took the opportunity to give him a warning against any act of folly; referring to the manner in which the Turkish press, until the enactment in March of the Extraordinary Laws, had unceasingly attacked every action that the Turkish Government took, I pointed out that press utterances were an unreliable guide to public opinion. The "Daily Mail" campaign had been no embarrassment to His Majesty's Government, and if any aggression were committed against Irak, the Turkish Government would find it resented with surprising unanimity. Ismet answered that he quite understood that; it was so in such circumstances in every country. I subsequently repeated to Tewfik Rushdi Bey the substance of my conversation with Ismet Pasha, and I detailed this part of it to him with emphasis. I also saw Rejeb Bey, the Minister of War, about some other business. I congratulated him on having so much money to spend, but I added that if, as common talk had it, some *coup de main* against Mosul was intended, ten times the credits to be allotted to his Department would not suffice to see him through, and he must know it better than anyone. He merely answered: "Oui, oui, Excellence."

5. Arising out of Ismet's remark reported above about the population of Mosul, I asked his Excellency whether the internal situation of Turkey would be affected if a frontier line were drawn so as to include any considerable number of Kurds in Irak. Ismet answered at once with considerable emphasis and earnestness that it certainly would be affected. Such an arrangement, he said quite frankly, would cause perpetual trouble for Turkey in her eastern vilayets; this was the essence of the menace to Turkish security, and, he said, the trouble would arise automatically, however loyally the British authorities might discharge their duties as neighbours. I have already expressed views to you in this same sense, but I was interested to receive an impressive confirmation of them from Ismet Pasha.

6. Now, six weeks before, on the 1st October, I had put the same question to Tewfik Rushdi and had received from him an answer to the effect that the Kurds of Turkey were so happy that no trouble was to be expected from them—an answer so futile that I did not care to report it to you. I told Tewfik Rushdi of what Ismet had said to me, reminded him of what he himself had told me, and reproached him for having thus put me off the scent for six weeks. I then had five minutes' great amusement while Tewfik Rushdi floundered around in the most confused explanations. I should be glad if I could persuade myself that the incident may teach our Minister for Foreign Affairs that it is sometimes unnecessary to lie to a foreign representative.

7. Each time I have been to Angora I have returned with the impression deepened further, if possible, that all decisions in the Turkish State depend on the will of the President; and so it is in this matter. I have no doubt that the General Staff urges on him a *coup de main* against Mosul. "War," they would say, "might not follow, but, if it did, what could England do? Blockade our coasts? perhaps even seize the Straits? perhaps even Constantinople? but what would that matter? We should get any amount of ammunition from Russia, and we could carry on indefinitely." I feel certain that Ismet, who has some statesmanship, opposes these views, and I think Tewfik Rushdi is now supporting him, for his mind seems to me now all taken up with ideas of reaching definite settlements with all adjoining and neighbouring States, and I believe that, however far along the path of extremism he may go in the tactics of negotiation, strategically he is anxious to remain on reasonably decent terms with Great Britain. Between these opposing views the Ghazi holds the balance in his own hands, and if he leaves the decision to his better self there can be no doubt as to its nature. But where much depends on one man, that man's personality becomes of importance, and unfortunately the Ghazi has very recently displayed in public his deplorable addiction to the two weaknesses which ruined the physical and mental capacities of so many of the Ottoman Sultans. The Europeans present on that occasion noticed that not one of the friends by whom he

was surrounded—and there were important and influential men among them—attempted to exercise the smallest restraint over him, so that all speculation is disturbed by the intrusion of an incalculable element. Fortunately so far neither his health nor his capacity for work seems to have been materially affected by his excesses, and he appears still to maintain a curious sort of watertight compartment between his private indulgences on the one side, and on the other the more essential part of his public duties; but the personal weakness remains, and it is sad to think that it may constitute a danger to the interests of nations, though I think that for the time being the danger is kept in check.

8. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's High Commissioner at Bagdad and His Majesty's Minister at Tehran.

I have, &c.  
R. C. LINDSAY.

[E 7326/175/44]

No. 81.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Lindsay (Constantinople).

(No. 1151.)

Sir, Foreign Office, November 30, 1925.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 785 of the 16th October, in the final paragraph of which you suggest that there are strong reasons for wishing that the League of Nations will not impose on the mandatory Power in Irak any obligation in the direction of fostering nationalism in Southern Kurdistan.

2. I fully appreciate the force of your contention that Anglo-Turkish relations could be placed on a satisfactory footing, if only means were found to eliminate the "direct menace to the very heart of Turkish policy" which is implied in the proposal to found a sort of Kurdish National Home in Northern Irak, just across the south-eastern frontier of Turkey.

3. His Majesty's Government are, however, to a considerable extent committed in this matter. The commission appointed by the Council of the League laid down in the "Final Conclusions" of its report, as an essential condition for the union with Irak of the whole territory south of the Brussels line, that "regard must be paid to the desires expressed by the Kurds that officials of Kurdish race should be appointed for the administration of their country, the dispensation of justice, and teaching in the schools, and that Kurdish should be the official language of all these services." The commission held that it would be more advantageous for the territory to remain under Turkish sovereignty if this condition were not fulfilled and if League of Nations control were to terminate on the expiry (in 1928) of the existing Anglo-Irak treaty. It was evident that the League Council would be loth to disregard so emphatic a recommendation by the commission which it had appointed for the express purpose of laying before it "all information and all suggestions which might be of a nature to assist it in reaching a decision"; and Mr. Amery accordingly informed the Council on the 3rd September that "His Majesty's Government gladly gives an assurance that the existing system, which does to a large extent carry out the recommendations of the commission, will be continued, and made even more effective." On the following day (the 4th September) Mr. Amery spoke with still greater emphasis: "The Kurdish population enjoys a wide measure of racial autonomy at this moment, and we are prepared to extend it. I notice that the representative of Turkey has nowhere in his speech suggested that, if this territory were handed over to Turkey, these privileges would be conferred on the Kurdish population, and I should like to ask definitely whether, in regard to any Kurdish population which might be included in Turkey or is in Turkey to-day, the Turkish Government is prepared to give the assurance to the Council that we have explicitly given." Tewfik Rushdy Bey, in his subsequent reply, evaded this point.

4. His Majesty's Government clearly cannot now recede from these explicit assurances, and it is, indeed, evident that if they were to do so, or if they had evaded the issue at Geneva, their action would be tantamount to inviting the Council to allot the disputed territory to Turkey in accordance with the commission's recommendation mentioned above.

5. I am ready to admit that, from the diplomatic point of view, there is a certain British interest to be served by reducing as far as possible the number of Kurds for whose government the Irak authorities are responsible, and, as regards administra-

tion also, the turbulent Kurdish element in Northern Irak is a constant source of trouble. It so happens, however, that the retention of the Kurdish districts—which form the greater part of the Mosul Vilayet—is a *sine qua non* for the very existence of the State of Irak. To abandon them would create the situation which Mr. Amery described as follows at Geneva:—

"Any frontier which deprived Irak of its richest corn districts and of a substantial part of its revenue, as well as of some of its best human material for the recruitment of its forces, and then left it, financially and militarily weakened, with the problem of defending a strategically indefensible frontier, would impose upon it a task which would be entirely beyond its capacity, and for which the League could not expect the British Government or the British taxpayers to make themselves responsible."

6. It would beyond doubt be most helpful, both as regards Anglo-Turkish relations in general and with a view to secure a satisfactory settlement of the Irak frontier dispute, if means could be devised of allaying the Turks' apprehensions in regard to a quasi-autonomous Kurdistan over their border. I fear, however, that, having regard to the undertakings given by His Majesty's Government to the League and to their responsibilities towards Irak, it is impossible to attain this object by withdrawing the measure of autonomy already granted to the Kurds in Irak or by declining to extend it in the sense of Mr. Amery's declaration at Geneva. There is, however, no idea in this of creating anything in the nature of an autonomous Kurdish State for the Kurdish districts of Irak or of reviving the policy contemplated in the Treaty of Sèvres, and there is no reason why you should not, on a convenient occasion, make this clear to the Turks.

I am, &c.  
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

No. 82.

*Sir R. Linasay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 2.)*

(No. 134.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Constantinople, November 30, 1925.*

MR. LEEPER has just returned from Angora with important information. He had the good fortune to have at his disposal exceptionally good means of getting reliable news. Substance is as follows:—

President of the Republic and Prime Minister are still united closely and resolutely and are in favour of peace. They are supported assiduously by Minister for Foreign Affairs, but feeling about Mosul has become so violent that they have to fight to have their way. In Cabinet they meet with strong opposition. In Assembly vast majority of Deputies are in favour of attack on Mosul, and are kept in order only by strenuous efforts of group of Deputies devoted to the President. Worst symptom is that Fevzi Pasha, Chief of Staff, who now has political ambitions, is strongly urging *coup de main* against Mosul, and receives whole-hearted support of corps of officers, whose loyalty to President is thus being undermined [two groups omitted], a form of pressure which it is obviously extremely difficult for President to resist.

Last week crisis arose when Hague Court's decision became known, and Chief of Staff formally proposed to Cabinet an immediate attack on Mosul. President and Prime Minister succeeded in defeating proposal, but it seems likely that all that was really done was to postpone a decision.

In Cabinet, Assembly and in army alike mainspring of aggressive tendency is due to terrible ignorance of everything outside Anatolia, and to absolute conviction that England will not fight under any circumstances. "Daily Mail" campaign in England had much to do with this. Everyone therefore thinks that Turks only have to march into Mosul and dig themselves in and it will all pass off. It is now no longer a matter of bluff but a contest between two parties in the State, both very much in earnest.

The situation is probably now clear for the next few days, but obviously another crisis may arise when League session ends, whether it results in a definite decision or in a further postponement. It is now very necessary to strengthen Ismet's hand

by dispelling ignorance prevailing at Angora as to results of an unprovoked aggression, and I urge on you once again and urgently my previous recommendation of a statement in Parliament (my despatch No. 840). In view, however, of danger of present acute situation, I think its terms should be far more ambiguous, though it should maintain courtesy of form. This would be for the Angora public; but I would beg you also to consider sending for Turkish Ambassador and making a very plain statement to him for benefit of Turkish Government.

A further element of doubt and danger is President's health. He is drinking terribly hard, and has been warned in writing by his doctor to desist. He had some sort of illness a few days ago, but since then recovered. Fevzi is said to be strongest candidate for his succession.

Mr. Leeper found atmosphere of Angora very much charged with electricity. Two well-known Deputies, to whom he was well introduced, excused themselves from seeing him on the ground of acuteness of political situation.

[E 7522/43/65]

No. 83.

*Record of Lord Inverforth's Interview with Sir Austen Chamberlain, December 3, 1925.*

IN reply to his request for an interview, the Secretary of State received Lord Inverforth to-day. Sir William Tyrrell was present at the interview by desire of the Secretary of State.

In answer to Sir Austen's enquiry, Lord Inverforth said that he had asked to see the Secretary of State as, owing to his friendly and intimate relations with the Turks, which he thought would enable him to use his influence with a view to settling any difference between the British and Turkish Governments, he placed his services for this purpose at the disposal of His Majesty's Government, in the event of their wishing to avail themselves of his offer.

Sir Austen enquired as to the nature of Lord Inverforth's relations with the Turks, and in this connection explained that his enquiry was due to the fact that rumours had reached him from several distinct sources to the effect that Lord Inverforth was engaged in negotiations with the Turks on the basis of oil concessions in return for the cession of Mosul. The Secretary of State explained that the view held by successive British Governments was that the concession given by the former Turkish Government was valid and binding on the rulers of Mosul, whoever they might be; that His Majesty's Government could recognise no other concession; and that they must therefore regard any attempt to uproot it as opposed to British policy.

Lord Inverforth replied that he had no interests in Mosul oil; that he had had no dealings with the Turks in connection with it; and that his only interest was confined to British shipping interests, which he feared might be injured if the Turkish Petroleum Company drifted away from British hands and got under foreign control. He therefore strongly urged that it should be tied up as closely as possible with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

Sir William Tyrrell explained to Lord Inverforth that the Turkish Petroleum Company was already a subsidiary company of the Anglo-Persian, that the British Government had associated with it French and American interests, and that, with its own preponderating influence, there was no danger of its drifting into foreign control.

The Secretary of State strongly emphasised the importance His Majesty's Government attached to the Turkish Petroleum Company, stating that they would consider any attack upon it as an unpatriotic act. They must maintain the validity of this company's concession, whatever the fate of Mosul might be. Lord Curzon had taken much trouble to secure both French and American participation in this company, so as to avoid all dangerous international rivalries, and until recently none had appeared. The Secretary of State could not explain the origin of the reports which had recently reached him from Paris and America, but he was glad to have received Lord Inverforth's assurance that neither directly nor indirectly, by himself or by others, had he entered into any negotiations or conversations in regard to a new concession for oil in Mosul with French, Americans or Turks.

With regard to Lord Inverforth's offer to mediate or act as intermediary between the two Governments, the Secretary of State said that he had already, in

the spring of last year, informed the Turkish Ambassador here that the question of Mosul had been referred to the League of Nations by their two Governments, and that His Majesty's Government could be no party to surrendering the vital interests of Irak in exchange for financial, trade or commercial concessions to British nationals. They were awaiting the decision of the League, and in so delicate a matter as this they did not think that the services of any intermediary could be safely employed, though they would always be ready to receive and consider any proposals for a settlement made directly to them by the Turkish Government.

Lord Inverforth said that he quite understood that in the present state of affairs nobody but a responsible Minister could be trusted to deal with the question.

*Foreign Office, December 3, 1925.*

[E 7485/32/65]

No. 84.

*Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Lindsay (Constantinople).*

(No. 1159.)

Sir,  
I INVITED the Turkish Ambassador to come and see me this morning.

I told his Excellency that I had a communication to make to him, but he himself had apparently wished to enter into a conversation with me after the dinner which I gave to the signatories of the Locarno Treaty on Tuesday evening, and, as it was impossible for me at that moment to free myself from other duties, I invited him now to say whatever he had wished to express on that occasion. The Ambassador replied that he had merely wished to express the hope that we might find a friendly solution of our differences. He did not develop and evidently did not desire to develop this theme, and I accordingly made to him my own declaration.

I told his Excellency that it was the earnest desire of the British Government to cultivate friendly relations with the Republic of Turkey. Between our two countries there had been a traditional friendship. British blood had been shed in defence of Turkey. It was only when Turkey joined our enemies in the late war that a quarrel arose between us, and it was our desire to resume the relations of confidence and friendship which had formerly prevailed between us. His Majesty's Government had shown that their policy was inspired by a sincere desire for peace. They had effected a reconciliation with the country to which they had been most immediately and most bitterly opposed during the war, and they felt that it should be easier to restore good relations between Turkey and Great Britain than it had been to effect this reconciliation with Germany. I greatly regretted that our two Governments had not been able to settle the frontiers of Irak between themselves without reference to any third party. Failing a direct settlement, our two Governments had agreed to refer the matter to the League of Nations, to respect, pending its decision, the boundary which it had provisionally fixed and, when its final decision was given, to accept the award. His Majesty's Government had renewed this assurance on every appropriate occasion. They had observed with regret that the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, when appearing before the Council in September last, had avoided renewing the Turkish acceptance and had sought to qualify it or to withdraw it. His Majesty's Government had observed the nature of the polemics indulged in in the Turkish press and even in speeches delivered by persons of authority. They were aware of the concentration of troops which had taken place in the neighbourhood of the frontier, and I desired, while carefully avoiding even the appearance of menace, to call his Excellency's attention to the gravity of these public declarations and this concentration of troops and to the menace of an attack upon the frontier from the Turkish side which they would seem to convey. I could not believe that the Turkish Government could contemplate a step which would not only be a flagrant breach of the engagements which they had undertaken to the League of Nations, but would bring the young republic into direct conflict with the League and with all that it stood for. The League was the greatest moral force existing in Europe and daily it was becoming a greater material force. Apart from the general condemnation which such a flagrant breach of international engagements would bring upon the Turkish Government, they must consider what under the terms of the Covenant of the League would

be the position of all the members of the League towards Turkey if it thus broke its engagements to the Council and defied the Council's judgment. I must add that the British Government was the mandatory for Irak under the supervision of the League, that it could not allow an attack upon the frontier which the League provisionally fixed or might ultimately determine, and that, if Turkey were to make such an attack, it would be faced not only with the whole authority and power of the League of Nations, but with that of the British Empire. I said that I made these observations as one who earnestly desired peace and friendship between our nations. I felt that it would not be frank or loyal to leave for the Council meeting at Geneva without informing the Turkish Government how gravely His Majesty's Government viewed the situation and what must be the consequences of any attack on the frontiers of the mandated territory. But I added that, when once the decision of the League had been given, if it should prove to be in our favour, I was prepared, if desired by the Turkish Government, to enter into conversations to see whether any *accommodations* were possible which might render more acceptable to them a solution which disappointed their hopes. I told his Excellency that I made this declaration both as to the gravity of the issues involved and as to our friendly dispositions and desire to live in relations *de bon voisinage* with Turkey by the express desire of my Government.

The Ambassador asked me in the first case to define more exactly what I had meant. Was I contemplating some territorial concession? His Excellency had observed suggestions in the Press that a method of accommodation could be found in the grant of a loan to Turkey. He must say that the Turkish Government had never thought of bargaining for economic advantages, and that no satisfaction could be found in the pursuit of such an idea. I told the Ambassador in reply that I could make no promise, and could indicate no specific proposals. I had in fact none in my mind, but I excluded none. What I had wished to make clear to him was our friendly disposition and the fact that, when a decision had been given, if that decision were in favour of the line which we had defended, we should be glad to consider any possible method of rendering the decision of the Council more acceptable to the Turkish Government and thus promoting the friendship between our Governments and nations which it was our desire to attain.

The Ambassador then began *à titre personnel* to enter into some detail as to territorial arrangements. He insisted again that economic and financial considerations had been no part of the Turkish preoccupation, and in this connection he said that he desired to assure me that, if financiers here had spoken of making a bargain with the Turkish Government on the basis of commercial concessions to British subjects and if they had come to him to enquire his views, this propaganda was in no way instigated by him and he had declared himself unable to entertain such propositions. I accepted his Excellency's assurance as I was bound in courtesy to do, and took the opportunity of observing that I attached no importance to what emanated from the quarters to which he had alluded. They never would be countenanced by His Majesty's Government. They had no influence upon British policy and I had not supposed that his Excellency would allow himself to be engaged in any compromising conversations with them.

As regards the discussion of boundaries which he had opened, I said that I felt that at this moment we were too widely separated to enter usefully into such discussions. Perhaps when the Council's decision had been given, both sides might feel that proceeding from that decision as we necessarily must do, some accommodation was possible which neither of us could accept at this moment. I must, however, insist that I was making no promises and no proposal. I was only desirous at the same time that I called his attention to the gravity of the situation to assure him that it was our desire to live in amity with Turkey and that, if the decision were in favour of our claim, that would not, in our view, preclude the consideration of any possible arrangement for rendering the decision more easily acceptable to the Turkish Government.

The Ambassador repeated that nothing was likely to satisfy the Turkish Government except such a division of the disputed territory as would give a large part of it to Turkey. He and his Government were most anxious on their side to renew the friendly relations of which I had spoken, but a decision in favour of the present boundary must be unacceptable to Turkey. He did not wish to say that it would be forcibly resisted, but it would poison our relations.

I replied that I could add nothing to what I had already said. What had

passed between us was very grave. I would beg him to report faithfully to his Government both the warning which our earnest desire for peace had obliged me to give and the expression of our willingness to enter into conversations when the Council's award had been delivered. I repeated that my declaration had been made to him by the express desire of my Government.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[E 7432/32/65]

No. 85.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,  
I AM directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to transmit to you the accompanying copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople,\* in which it is suggested that the present deadlock between the Turkish and British Governments over the Irak frontier question might be solved by the cession to Persia of the Kurdish districts lying between Amadia and Suleimanieh.

2. Sir R. Lindsay's suggestion was no doubt prompted by the statement recently made to him by Ismet Pasha that "so long as any large number of Kurds are included in Irak, the Turkish Government would have perpetual trouble in their eastern provinces, and trouble would arise automatically however loyally the British authorities might act as neighbours" (see Foreign Office letter of the 25th November).

3. The position appears to Sir Austen Chamberlain to be as follows: The Persians are in general more long-suffering and milder than the Turks in their methods of government, except where the Bahai sect is concerned, and the Kurdish population of the territory in question might be free from oppression if transferred to Persian rule. But two difficulties arise.

4. In the first place, the commission appointed by the Council of the League of Nations to advise it regarding the solution of the Irak frontier question considered it more advantageous for the disputed territory to remain under Turkish sovereignty if certain conditions regarding Kurdish officials and the use of the Kurdish language in these districts were not fulfilled, and if the League of Nations control over the territory was to terminate in 1928 on the expiry of the existing Anglo-Irak treaty. The transference to Persia of the region indicated by Sir R. Lindsay would not therefore meet the recommendations of the commission, which the Council will certainly be reluctant to disregard. The commission, in framing their recommendations, clearly were guided by the consideration that the Kurds in North-Eastern Irak ought not to be left under the sway of an Arab Government at Bagdad which had been released from all mandatory control; and the same objection would doubtless apply, in the eyes of the Council, to their inclusion in Persia without any guarantees for some measure of local autonomy.

5. In the second place, it can hardly be supposed that the Kurds would willingly accept transference from Iraki to Persian rule at the present day, when the ideas of self-determination enunciated by President Wilson have become popular throughout the Middle East. It would, moreover, be clear to the Kurds that the change was being effected not so much for their own sakes as in order to ease the political relations between Turkey and Great Britain.

6. I am to explain that Sir R. Lindsay had not received Sir Austen Chamberlain's despatch No. 1151 of the 30th November (see Foreign Office letter of that date) when he despatched the telegram enclosed herein.

7. Sir Austen Chamberlain will be glad to receive such observations as Mr. Secretary Amery may desire to offer on the proposal made by Sir R. Lindsay.

8. Copies of this letter are being sent to the Air Ministry and the War Office.

I am, &c.

LANCELOT OLIPHANT.

\* Not printed.

No. 86.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Macleay (Constantinople).

(No. 142.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, December 5, 1925.

I SENT for the Turkish Ambassador 4th December.

I began by reminding him that after the dinner to the signatories of the Locarno Treaty on 1st December he had expressed the wish to enter into conversation with me; I was now ready to listen to any views he might have to express. He replied that he had merely wished to express the hope that we should find a friendly solution of our differences, but he evidently did not desire to develop the theme, and I accordingly proceeded to make a declaration to him myself.

I assured him of the desire of His Majesty's Government to renew the traditional friendship between our countries that had been shattered by the war. His Majesty's Government had shown the peaceful basis of their policy by the recent reconciliation with Germany, and they felt that a restoration of good relations with Turkey would be easier than with Germany. I regretted the failure to settle the Irak frontier question by direct negotiation. Failing such direct settlement our two Governments had agreed to refer the matter to the League, meanwhile to respect the provisional boundary, and finally to accept the League's award. This latter pledge had been frequently renewed by His Majesty's Government, and its qualification or disavowal by the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs at Geneva in September had caused them great regret. They had not failed to observe the nature of the utterances of the Turkish press and authorities. They were aware of the concentration of troops near the frontier, and I wished, while carefully avoiding any appearance of menace, to invite his Excellency's attention to the gravity of these public declarations and this concentration of troops, and to the menace of a Turkish attack which they seemed to suggest. I was loth to believe that his Government could contemplate a step in flagrant violation of their engagements to the League, and one that would bring Turkey into direct conflict with the League, which was an ever-increasing moral force in Europe. Apart from the general condemnation deriving from a flagrant breach of international engagements, the Turkish Government must consider the position under the terms of the Covenant, of the members of the League towards Turkey should she break her engagements to the Council and defy the Council's judgment. His Majesty's Government, as mandatory for Irak under the supervision of the League, could not allow an attack upon the frontier provisionally fixed or ultimately determined by the League, and should Turkey make any such attack she would be faced with the authority and power both of the League and of the British Empire.

I said that I made these observations as one earnestly desiring peace and friendship between our countries, but I had felt that it would not be frank or loyal to proceed to Geneva for the Council meeting without informing the Turkish Government how gravely His Majesty's Government viewed the situation and what must be the consequences of any Turkish attack. But I added that once the decision of the League had been given, if it should prove to be in our favour, I was ready, should the Turkish Government so desire, to enter into conversations to see whether any accommodations were possible to render more acceptable to them a solution which disappointed their hopes. I informed his Excellency that it was by the express desire of His Majesty's Government that I made to him this declaration, both as to the gravity of the issues involved and as to our desire for friendly relations.

The Turkish Ambassador asked me to define what I meant and whether I was contemplating territorial concessions. He repudiated suggestions appearing in the press that Turkey could be satisfied by the grant of a loan or by other economic advantages. I replied that I could make no promises, and that I had, in fact, no specific proposals in mind, although I excluded none. I only wished to emphasise our friendly disposition and our readiness, should the decision be in favour of the line which we had defended, to consider any possible method of rendering the Council's decision more acceptable to his Government and thus promoting the friendship between our countries which we desired to attain.

His Excellency then, speaking in his personal capacity, began to discuss territorial arrangements. He repeated that no bargain based on financial, economic or commercial concessions to British subjects could affect the question, and any propaganda based thereon was neither instigated nor had been entertained by him. I accepted this assurance and added that I attached no importance to such rumours,

which would not be countenanced by His Majesty's Government and could not influence our policy.

As regards boundaries, I said I felt that at this moment we were too widely separated usefully to enter into discussions. Perhaps after the Council had given their decisions both sides might feel that, starting from that decision, as we must, some accommodation might be possible which neither of us could accept at the present moment. But I insisted that I was making no promises and no proposal. I only desired, at the same time as I called his attention to the gravity of the situation, to assure him that we desired to live in amity with Turkey, and that, should the decision favour our claim, this would not preclude the consideration of any possible arrangement for rendering the decision more acceptable to his Government.

His Excellency repeated that nothing was likely to satisfy his Government except such division of the disputed territory as would give a large part of it to Turkey. His Government reciprocated our desire for friendly relations, but a decision in favour of the present boundary must be unacceptable to Turkey. He did not wish to say that it would be forcibly resisted, but it would poison our relations.

I replied that I could add nothing to what I had said. What had passed between us was very grave, and I would beg him to report faithfully to his Government both the warning which our desire for peace had obliged me to give and the expression of our willingness to enter into conversations when the Council's award had been delivered. Finally, I repeated that my declaration had been made by the express desire of my Government.

[E 7534/362/65]

No. 87.

*Sir P. Loraine to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 8.)*

(No. 607. Confidential.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch to His Majesty's High Commissioner, Bagdad, of even date, on the subject of enquiries into the reports that Turkish troops were concentrating near the Persian frontier and that Turkish officers had arrived at Urumia to negotiate for their passage through Persian territory to Rowanduz.

I have, &c.  
PERCY LORAIN.

Enclosure 1 in No. 87.

*Sir P. Loraine to Sir H. Dobbs.*

(Confidential.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith copies of two despatches Nos. 73 and 77 of the 5th and 6th November addressed to me by His Majesty's consul at Tabriz.

2. These despatches give the result of enquiries made by Mr. Gilliat-Smith into reports which had been circulating in Tabriz regarding a concentration of Turkish troops near the Persian frontier and the arrival of some Turkish officers at Urumia to negotiate with the Persian authorities for their passage through Persian territory to Rowanduz. The substance of these reports was telegraphed by the military attaché to this Legation to air headquarters at Bagdad.

3. As was anticipated they have turned out to be practically without foundation, and they appear to have been deliberately circulated in Tabriz for some political purpose.

4. The Pasha Khan referred to in both despatches is the chief of the police in Tabriz; Mirza Ali Khan, a member of the consul's staff.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch and of its enclosures to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

I have, &c.  
PERCY LORAIN.

Enclosure 2 in No. 87.

*Consul Gilliat-Smith to Sir P. Loraine.*

(No. 73.)

*Tabriz, November 5, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to report that Pasha Khan is now back in Tabriz, and in an interview with Mirza Ali Khan gave the latter to understand that he had not met Turkish officers in Urumia, as had been reported to me, and I gather that the gravity of the situation has been greatly exaggerated.

2. Pasha Khan, during his tour, visited Salmas, and he met Simko, who was accompanied by 100 cavalrymen only, at Adjevadj, a village situated at 3 farsangs distance from Dilman. His interview with Simko lasted four hours. Khalid Bey, chief of the Hassanlu tribe of Turkish Kurds, Ali Bahri Bey, another chief, and Teimur Aga were present at the meeting.

3. Simko complained of the Commandant of Salmas, Colonel Kaib Ali Khan, and, according to Pasha Khan (who never misses an opportunity to disparage the general), of Mehmet Hussein Khan, who, he said, do not treat him with respect. He disclaimed all connection with the Turks, and said that recent rumours to the effect that he and his followers were likely to come to an understanding with the Ottomans was entirely false. He added that he was devoted to Reza Khan Pehlevi, and that he had no grudge or cause of complaint in that direction.

4. With regard to the number of Turkish troops on the eastern frontier, Simko said that the 40,000 mentioned in persistent rumours were in the district of Van, and that there are not more than 5,000 on the Persian frontier. According to him, Fouzi Bey (Turkish Minister of War?), is in command at Van. He said that these forces are well paid and well equipped, and are more than sufficient to cope with the British forces at Mosul, which, he alleges, consist of Arabs and Assyrians and do not number more than 8,000.

5. Simko said that he had heard from Turkish sources that, in the event of armed conflict over the Mosul question, Turkey will receive material help from the Soviets.

6. All the above emanates from Simko as reported by Pasha Khan.

7. I have likewise seen M. Vaki Artsruni, whose father-in-law owns extensive property in the Mergaver district and who is generally well informed. He tells me that there certainly is a danger of the Turks endeavouring to violate Persian territory in order to provide for their army, which could pass the winter in the district of Salmas, Urumia, Ushnu, and prepare for an attack on Rowanduz, but he considers the danger to be for the present somewhat remote. Even were the Turks to act as suggested, he doubts whether they would be able to bring up the necessary reinforcements through country which they have almost wholly depopulated. He says that many parts of the Turkish territory along the frontier district in question are already covered with snow, and he does not anticipate any trouble before next spring. M. Artsruni is strongly of the opinion that Simko's position is now very strong and that whoever he sides with will receive a very considerable asset. He says that any rapprochement on the part of Simko with the Turks is out of the question. He says that the British should strengthen their position in Rowanduz and should cultivate the friendship of Simko.

8. It will be interesting to observe how far the news and views of Pasha Khan and Artsruni tally with the information which I hope to receive in a few days direct from Urumia.

I have, &c.  
B. GILLIAT-SMITH.

Enclosure 3 in No. 87.

*Consul Gilliat-Smith to Sir P. Loraine.*

(No. 77.)

*Tabriz, November 6, 1925.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 73 of the 5th instant, I have the honour to report that my messenger has now returned from Urumia, and that his report agrees in the main with what I have already heard from Pasha Khan and from Artsruni. There have been no Turkish officers in Urumia. Troops in the vicinity of Ushnu and the

Mergaver district are said to number 5,000 to 6,000, but others are reported more numerous near Bash Kale and Gavar Dize.

2. Mubayyen-es-Sultana, Karguzar at Urumia, denies that any advances have been made to the Persian authorities by the Turks, and no one else in Urumia appears to know of such *pourparlers* having occurred. It would seem that the rumour originated, for what reasons is not clear, among the ranks of the Democrats at Tabriz, and notably Aga Zade, who likewise said that a Democrat had been sent to parley with the Turks.

3. Mubayyen-es-Sultana further says that Simko is playing a double game, and that it is not true that he is not in constant communication with the Turks, whom he meets every few days in the vicinity of Sari Dash. Pasha Khan has also given me a further report on his interview with Simko, in which he says that the latter alleys that he has quarrelled with Omar Khan owing to his having discovered that Omar was sent by the Persian authorities to poison him. Neither Pasha Khan nor Mirza Ali Khan believe this story, and they think that Simko has invented it as a blind in order to hide his real movements. Omar is suspected of being in close touch with the Turks.

4. Mubayyen-es-Sultana went on to say that Simko had lately been looting the Sindji villages, and, further, he had razed to the ground the houses of eleven families of Kurds inhabiting Salmas, who had refused to join him. Persian troops made a show of following up Simko's men after this raid. The Karguzar further said that he understood that the Turks would fight over the Mosul question if they were not given entire satisfaction in accordance with their demands.

5. An Assyrian told my messenger that many of his compatriots who leave for Rowanduz and Mosul are in the pay of the Russian consulate, Urumia. The Karguzar, talking of Russia, said that the Soviet authorities are very disappointed at the peaceful development of the dynasty question, and that they were counting on trouble.

6. To sum up, the report relative to the presence of Turkish officers negotiating with the Persians for the passage of troops appears to be false, but the Turks, according to reports from Simko, Artsruni, Mubayyen-es-Sultana and other sources, have an army of between 5,000 and 6,000 men, probably well equipped, in the vicinity of the Persian frontier, with reserves behind, who expect to receive orders to march on Rowanduz in the event of a breakdown of negotiations over the Mosul question.

7. With regard to minor details, reports do not agree: according to the Karguzar of Urumia, the Turks are now on better terms with their own Kurds. This is in flat contradiction to the reports received from Artsruni and to those of Simko himself, which latter, however, others suggest may be deliberately inaccurate.

I have, &c.  
B. GILLIAT-SMITH.

No. 88.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 8.)*

[By Bag.]

(No. 482. Confidential.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Paris, December 7, 1925.*

MR. PHIPPS mentioned to M. Berthelot in the course of conversation this afternoon how anxious His Majesty's Government were over the question of Mosul. M. Berthelot replied that he had the day before yesterday spoken with rough frankness on the subject to M. Undén. M. Berthelot made it quite clear to M. Undén that, placed between Turkey on the one side and Great Britain on the other, France had no kind of hesitation in ranking herself by the side of the latter. Turkey, he pointed out, no longer counted. She was incapable of doing anything useful or of producing anything whatever. She could not govern, and her only speciality was massacre. M. Berthelot pointed out that France, both on account of her interests on the spot and of her general world interests, was absolutely determined to stand by Great Britain. If M. Undén imagined that by giving way to the Turks over Mosul and awarding some such line as that of the Lesser Zab the Council would in any way be settling the question he was very much mistaken. All that would happen would be that the entire Christian population allotted to Turkey in those regions would be massacred, and the League would incur

the odium. France herself had endeavoured to come to an arrangement with Turkey by the Treaty of Angora, and on six occasions had tried to settle the Turkish-Syrian boundary on the spot. Four times the Turks had failed to put in an appearance, and on the other two occasions they had, after a few hours' fruitless discussion, advanced such impossible pretensions that the negotiations had had to be broken off. Any undue encouragement to the Turks over Mosul would merely make them more intransigent elsewhere. M. Berthelot admitted that M. Undén had not seemed to be in the least shaken by these arguments. Mr. Phipps remarked that M. Undén appeared to be a rock, but M. Berthelot replied that he was merely an imbecile.

M. Berthelot said that M. Briand was fully determined to stand by Great Britain through thick and thin over this question, which was so serious a one for His Majesty's Government, and in return France would expect Great Britain in her turn to support France if serious occasion arose.

M. Berthelot said that only yesterday M. Briand had himself, in reply to a telephone call from M. Paul-Boncour at Geneva, impressed upon the latter that he must support His Majesty's Government in every way. M. Paul-Boncour, not satisfied with this personal message from M. Briand, had to-day asked for written and definite instructions, which are being sent to him, but meanwhile M. Berthelot hopes that you will inform M. Paul-Boncour that you have been told by M. Briand of his personal telephone message to him at Geneva, and that you therefore rely on him for full support.

M. Berthelot incidentally remarked that both he and M. Briand entirely disapproved of the ambiguous attitude which had been previously adopted in the matter by M. Loucheur.

M. Berthelot is convinced that the Turks are merely bluffing, for after Locarno they must realise that they will get no assistance from Germany, and, according to reliable information recently received by the French Government from Moscow, the Soviets have no intention of helping them either. M. Berthelot has seen the Turkish Ambassador several times lately, and says that he seems to be completely unnerved.

(Sent to Geneva.)

No. 89.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 9.)*  
(No. 401.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Geneva, December 8, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from Mr. Cadogan:—

"Council at its sitting to-day considered a report by M. Undén recommending adoption of consultative opinion of Hague Court. Secretary of State for Colonies briefly referred to statement made by him on 19th September to the effect that assurances given by Lord Parmoor could not be held to be of effect if equivalent and reciprocal assurances given by Fethi Bey were withdrawn. He pointed out that situation envisaged in that statement could not now arise, as reply of court had made it clear that authority of Council and obligation of parties to accept its decision were in no sense dependent on or affected by any assurances or declarations made by parties but were directly based on and implied in article 3 of Treaty of Lausanne. There could be no question of His Majesty's Government repudiating their treaty obligations. His Majesty's Government regarded themselves as bound to accept in advance decision which they asked Council to give.

"Munir Bey read a long statement traversing legal conclusions of Hague Court, and towards the end, basing himself on reference by court to fact that function of Council also included conciliation, pressed strongly for an endeavour to reach a decision by mediation.

"M. Undén subsequently pointed out that Council had certainly not lost sight of their mediatory function in this matter.

"When President put adoption of report to the vote Munir Bey claimed that for this purpose a unanimity inclusive of Turkish and British was required.

"After a prolonged adjournment, president (Signor Scialoja) announced that, while in his opinion this was a matter of procedure on which a bare majority of votes was sufficient, it was in any case sufficient to point out that

under article 15 votes of parties concerned could not be counted in reckoning unanimity, and on this basis a unanimous vote was taken with only Turks voting against.

"In discussion just before adjournment Munir Bey had produced a prepared declaration in which he said that Turkish delegation had no authority from Grand National Assembly to submit to arbitration so vital an issue, and that if Council decided to regard this as a matter for arbitration Turkish delegation could not take further part in proceedings or defend its case before Council. After president's statement he repeated substance of this, saying that he could regard any decision Council might take as a recommendation of which he could take cognisance and which he could communicate to Grand National Assembly, adding that once he and his colleagues were faced by an arbitral award their powers as a delegation came to an end."

(Sent to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

[E 7602/32/65]

No. 90.

*Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received December 10.)*

Sir,

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th December, 1925, regarding the suggestion made by His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople that the deadlock over the Irak frontier question might be solved by the cession of certain Kurdish districts to Persia.

2. In reply, I am to enclose a copy of a memorandum which Sir Henry Dobbs has furnished on the subject. I am to explain that Mr. Amery had an opportunity of discussing the matter with Sir H. Dobbs before he left for Geneva, and that he found himself in agreement with the High Commissioner's criticisms of Sir R. Lindsay's suggestion.

I am, &c.  
J. E. SHUCKBURGH.

Enclosure in No. 90.

*Memorandum by Sir Henry Dobbs respecting the suggested Transfer of Kurdish Areas of Irak to Persia.*

(Confidential.)

I WILL examine the suggested transfer of the greater part of the Kurdish fringe to Persia, first, from the point of view of Irak, then from that of the Kurds, and lastly from that of Turkey.

(A.) *Irak Interests.*

(1.)—*Security.*

If Irak did not control the Kurdish mountains up to the crests of the nearest main ranges, the rich plains of Eastern Mosul, Arbil and Kirkuk would be subject to constant raids, against which a most expensive and elaborate chain of defensive posts would have to be maintained, probably ineffectually. Raiding bands would issue into the plains, and pursuit beyond the new Persian frontier would be an act of war. A proper control of her new Kurdish subjects would be beyond the power of Persia, and there would be frequent severe friction between Irak and Persia. I doubt whether the all-important new railway line, from Kirkuk via Arbil to Mosul, could be in such circumstances maintained. The same reasons which drive India to control her Pathan mountain-fringe drive Irak to do the same with regard to her Kurdish mountain-fringe.

(2.)—*Financial.*

The tobacco excise of Suleimanieh brings into Irak yearly something like £200,000. She could ill afford to lose it.

(3.)—*Political.*

The Kurdish representatives in the Irak Parliament have been the chief steady factor in politics. They voted solid for the Anglo-Irak Treaty and always vote solid for the British connection. The result of their withdrawal could be incalculable. Moreover, without them, the Shias would have a predominance in the Irak Parliament. This would be intensely resented by the Irak Sunni ruling classes, and would place the bigoted, ignorant and reactionary Shias led by the ulama in power.

(B.) *Kurdish Interests.*

The Irak Kurds are all very devout Sunnis. Persia is Shah, and her whole population, including the Kurds now within her borders, is Shah, except for a few Kurdish tribes half within and half without her borders. The Irak Sunni Kurds would, I believe, fight to the death against subjection to Persia. They would regard their transfer to Persia by Great Britain as a monstrous betrayal, especially as it is they who have consistently supported the British connection. It is true that they have recently been disquieted with Turkey owing to Mustafa Kemal's anti-religious policy; but they would far rather be under a Turkifying and anti-religious Turkey than under a heretic Persia. Persia, moreover, has begun subjecting and disarming her Kurds quite as rigorously as Turkey, although she will probably not be strong enough to carry this policy out so thoroughly as Turkey.

(C.) *Turkish Interests.*

The main purpose of Turkish policy towards her Kurds is well known to be that she may break down the Kurdish wall which is interposed between herself and the Turkish population of the Persian Province of Azerbaijan. The first object of the pan-Uranians is Azerbaijan, and we know that Mustafa Kemal, in amazing ignorance of Persian sentiment and of certain Bolshevik opposition, went so far as to instruct the Turkish Ambassador at Tehran to negotiate with Persia for the cession of Azerbaijan to Turkey. The transfer of the Kurds between Amadia and Rowanduz to Persia would give Persia a wedge on the flank of the Turkish route to Azerbaijan, would defeat the object of the Turks in their Kurdish policy and would be highly displeasing to them. I believe they would prefer to see the Kurds remain under Irak.

The root of the Turkish suspicion against us is the clause in the Treaty of Sèvres which provided for an independent Kurdistan. I have steadily pursued in Irak a policy of taking the edge off Kurdish national sentiment, and of assimilating the administration of the Kurdish tracts to that of the rest of Irak. Between Amadia and Rowanduz Kurdish national sentiment has now practically ceased to exist. Along the eastern Irak border, from Rowanduz to Halebja, it persists, but much modified, and will disappear as soon as the half-mad Sheikh Mahmoud is eliminated. The only privileges now enjoyed by the Kurds are that, as far as is consistent with good administration, Kurdish-speaking officials are appointed in their districts, Kurdish is taught side by side with Arabic in the schools, and, in the purely Kurdish tracts, subordinate officials are allowed to correspond with divisional headquarters in Kurdish. Divisional headquarters, however, have to correspond with the Central Government in Arabic. Petitions may be presented in Kurdish. This is not autonomy in any form, and the administrative bonds which attach the Kurds to Irak are being ever more tightly drawn.

It seems possible that, if this state of affairs were carefully and patiently explained to the Turks, and if we were to pledge ourselves that the foregoing policy will be steadily pursued, their suspicions might be lessened, while at the same time the present Kurdish policy of Irak adequately fulfils the pledges given by Mr. Amery at Geneva last September in regard to the future treatment of the Kurds.

H. DOBBS.

December 6, 1925.

No. 91.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 11.)*

(No. 408.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Cadogan:—

"Following are conclusions of General Laidoner's report, which was read to the Council this morning:—

"1. Raids by tribal and village chiefs from one side of the Brussels line to the other are ordinary frontier incidents and inevitable so long as frontier question is not definitely settled and line has not been marked out on the spot.

"2. Occupation of villages during the summer and autumn by Turkish military posts and patrols is confirmed. Commission ascertained that all villages mentioned in British protest (Dershish Nuzar, &c.) are south of the Brussels line. Turkish local authorities seem to be aware of this, as no Turkish posts now exist south of the line; and if they refrain henceforward from sending posts and patrols into this area question of violation of frontier might almost be regarded as settled.

"3. General Laidoner could not express a formal opinion regarding Turkish protests about flights of British aircraft north of the line, as he had not been able to make investigation in Turkish zone; but explained that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine exact position of aircraft from the ground owing to mountainous character of the country and height and speed of the machines. Also Turks may consider villages mentioned in paragraph 2 to be north of the line, but they are in fact to the south, and British aircraft have frequently flown over them.

"4. Above incidents are not of any importance as regards Council's decision. Deportations of Christians are infinitely more important, as they are causing fairly serious and easily comprehended agitation and nervousness among Christian population south of the Brussels line and in the whole of Mosul Vilayet, and also among pro-Irak population of Mosul. There are now some 3,000 deported Christians in Zakho district, and every day isolated groups continue to arrive in Irak. Refugees also include a small group of Moslems. Persons from various villages were interviewed separately in detailed and impartial manner, including certain refugees just arrived from their homes who had not come into contact with Irak local authorities or with compatriots already in Irak. All statements agree that Turkish soldiers under command of officers occupied villages, obtained delivery of all arms, imposed very heavy fines, demanded women, pillaged houses and subjected inhabitants to atrocious acts of violence, going as far as massacre; and that deportations took place *en bloc masse* to a district farther removed from Brussels line. Several persons fell ill on the way and were abandoned; others died of starvation and cold, having been unable to take food or clothing with them. All who have arrived are in an absolutely pitiable state, in spite of Irak Government's subsidies and financial help from persons and institutes in England. They have nothing to hope for at present, and it is practically impossible to find work for them. Fact that they arrived without any means of subsistence furnishes definite evidence that all were constrained by violence to leave their homes.

"General Laidoner added that a telegram received from Colonel Jac, who stayed behind at Mosul, indicated all quiet on the Brussels line; and that a further more detailed report would shortly be presented to the Council.

"Council noted report and asked General Laidoner to remain at the disposal of the sub-committee."

(Sent to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 92.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 11.)*

(No. 410.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Cadogan:—

"Council met this morning in public and heard report by General Laidoner and also letter from Turkish delegation regarding their present position, full report of which is contained in my telegrams Nos. 401 and 408. Subsequently Council heard a long explanation from Hungarian representative on law respecting admittance of various portions of population of Hungary to schools and universities in his country, and it was agreed that further time should be given *rapporteur* to frame his report in the light of explanations given by Hungarian representative.

"Complaint of Albanian Government regarding deportation to Anatolia of Moslems of Albanian origin in Greece was heard, and also reply of representative of mandatories of League (Mixed Commission for Exchange of Populations). It was decided that minutes of meeting would be sent to Mixed Commission and to Greek Government, and that Council should examine this question at its next session.

"The 22nd March next was approved as date for next meeting of Advisory Commission for Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People.

"Subsequently Council met in secret and approved appointment of Colonel de Reynier, formerly president of Danzig Harbour Board, as provisional records commissioner for the future Saar plebiscite.

"It was decided to refer request of Permanent Mandates Commission for remuneration to supervisory commission in order that Council might re-examine the matter at its next session and decide whether request should be referred to Assembly. Grant of an exceptional allowance to military attachés who had enquired into recent incidents between Bulgaria and Greece was approved."

No. 93.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 10.)*

(No. 411.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Geneva, December 10, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Cadogan:—

"My telegram No. 408.

"Turkish delegation declined invitation to attend meeting. Essential passage of their letter, which was read out to Council, is as follows:—

"Since members of Council who voted for adoption of Hague court's opinion regard Council as having right to take a binding decision without counting votes of the two interested parties, and since Turkish delegation (as was explained at meeting on 8th December) have no powers to represent Turkey save before Council acting in accordance with article 5 or article 15 of Covenant, the delegation regret that they cannot accept invitation which they have just received, although they would have been disposed to accept if authority which they possess permitted them to do so."

"Letter was signed by Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, who, although present in Geneva, did not appear at meeting on 8th December."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 94.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 13.)*  
(No. 418.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Amery:—

"Turkish delegation were invited to attend meeting of sub-committee yesterday morning. Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that as he had not received an answer but merely an acknowledgment to letter quoted in my telegram No. 411, he had not the necessary powers to discuss Mosul question officially with sub-committee until Turkish Assembly had pronounced itself concerning Council's 'recommendation' of 8th December to accept Hague Court's opinion (see my telegram No. 401, last paragraph). Meanwhile, however, he was always ready to meet members of sub-committee privately if a proposal were made to him which he felt able to recommend to his Government and Assembly with a view to facilitate conciliation."

"Secretary replied that Council desired, in accordance with opinion of Hague Court, which it had adopted, only to use its power of decision if its mediatory action failed. Council had never ceased to exercise this function and wished sub-committee to make final attempt at mediation. This was the object of the meeting to which Turks had been invited."

"Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that ever since Mosul question first came before the Council Turkey had received no conciliatory proposal from the Council regarding settlement of the dispute. He had therefore read secretary's letter with great astonishment. It was inconceivable that sub-committee's meeting should be regarded as destined to terminate mediatory rôle conferred on the Council by article 3 of Treaty of Lausanne unless conciliatory proposals had been made without his knowledge to Great Britain, and rejected by her. Turkey, as was well known, had repeatedly given proof of her conciliatory spirit."

"I myself attended, and in answer to question whether we could not arrive at a settlement by mutual agreement, pointed out difficulty of arriving at any common ground as a basis from which to start in face of a claim which was, in fact, a demand for reversal of *status quo* set up after the war, incompatible with existence of Irak, and against the wishes of the population affected. We were anxious to come to an amicable settlement, but only effective starting-point for this was a decision by the League."

(Sent to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 95.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 15.)*

[By Bag.]

(No. 493. Confidential.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Paris, December 14, 1925.*

MR. PHIPPS saw M. Berthelot this afternoon and enquired whether he could tell him anything about the activities in Paris of the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, who arrived yesterday morning from Geneva and returned there last night. M. Berthelot said that Tewfik Rushdi Bey had been met yesterday at the station by General Mougin, who had been inclined to accede to Tewfik's request to take him to see M. Briand at Cocherel. Not only did M. Berthelot prevent this directly he heard of it, but he himself declined to see the Turkish Minister, who therefore left Paris without having seen M. Briand or M. Berthelot. Mr. Phipps enquired whether Tewfik Rushdi had seen either M. Chicherin or M. Rakovski, and M. Berthelot declared that he was convinced that he had not done so in spite of certain declarations of Tewfik Rushdi in the French press (see my despatch No. 2670 of to-day).

2. M. Berthelot's Turkophobia seems to have become more healthy than ever. He continues to believe that the Turks are merely bluffing, in spite of somewhat

nervous telegrams received from the French Ambassador at Constantinople. He even gave Mr. Phipps the impression that he would deplore any tendency on the part of His Majesty's Government to retreat in any way from their position over Mosul. He lashed out against General Mougin, whom he described as a mere agent of M. Franklin-Bouillon, and as being more of a Turk than a Frenchman. If M. Briand, who only returned late this afternoon from the country, acts in accordance with a minute which M. Berthelot read out to Mr. Phipps, General Mougin will spend a very disagreeable quarter of an hour for having met the Turkish Minister at the station and for having risked placing M. Briand in an awkward position *vis-à-vis* of Great Britain by suggesting that he should escort him to Cocherel.

3. M. Berthelot's Turkophobia has not made him any more Italophile than usual, for he inveighed against Signor Scialoja, whose attitude and language on the Council of the League he described as "louche," and as calculated to favour the postponement of a decision over Mosul to the spring, when the melting of the snows would be to the advantage (a) of the Turks and (b) of fishers in troubled waters (i.e., Italy).

4. M. Berthelot continues to believe that Turkey will get no support from the Soviets beyond what might be described as "diplomatique," that is to say, none at all. (Copy sent to Geneva.)

No. 96.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 15.)*

(No. 430.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Geneva, December 15, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from Secretary of State for the Colonies for Lord Cecil:—

"At a late hour yesterday evening Avenol informed me Council had decided to fix definitely on Brussels line, subject, however, to decision becoming of no effect and question opened again if new treaty embodying mandatory conditions of current treaty is not carried through and ready for submission to League by a certain date. He officially transmitted to me question asking me to state definitely within what time His Majesty's Government would be in a position to submit to Council of League of Nations, in the same way as was done with present treaty, a new treaty for twenty-five years embodying clauses in present treaty which Council's resolution of 27th September, 1924, accepted as equivalent to clauses of other A mandates. I have replied as follows:—

(R.) "In answer to question put to me by Council, I see no difficulty in submission within six months from present date of a new treaty with Irak which will continue mandate responsibility towards League which is embodied in current treaty and in League decision of 27th September, 1924, for twenty-five years or until such early date as Irak is, in the opinion of Council, qualified for admission to membership of League."

"I need not assure Council that His Majesty's Government is anxious to arrive at a final settlement of this question at [? omitted: earliest] possible date." (End of R.)

"Avenol is transmitting verbally our view that we confidently expect to have treaty ready for March session, if not before. The mandatory clauses referred to in question fall within conditions laid down by Cabinet for my guidance, nor [? would their] continuance in a new treaty affect policy embodied in military and financial agreements of bringing our military expenditure on Irak to an end after terminating present treaty period. As regards twenty-five years, Avenol assures me decision which [group undecypherable] is drafting will make it clear that it is a maximum. Both Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and I regard this as under all the circumstances a satisfactory solution and one most fully safeguarding liberty of Parliament; in signing declaration we were prepared to submit [two groups undecypherable], but if we judge it advisable Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will make on announcement of our decision the statement which you suggested as to our anxiety to come to friendly arrangement with Turks."

No. 97.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 16.)*

(No. 495.)

[By Bag.]

*Paris, December 14, 1925.*

THE Ambassador of the Soviets called on me this morning, he having recently presented his credentials to the President of the Republic.

After some conversation about M. Krassin, whose health M. Rakovski thought would be improved by his not having to take from London the frequent journeys to Moscow which were involved in his tenure of an official post there as well as of the Paris Embassy, we spoke of Turkey and the critical position of the Mosul question. The Ambassador said he was anxious to repeat to me what had already appeared in the English press as a *démenti*, that no treaty obligations of any kind existed between Russia and Turkey which would oblige the former to support the latter in case of a rupture occurring over the frontier line. Further than that, his Government had no intention of interesting themselves in this question in any form; they were far too much occupied with difficult internal questions to engage in any foreign dispute. He would not deny that he regarded the Turks and their Government with no little sympathy, and he hoped that the forthcoming decision of the Council, which he understood might enjoin a period of delay, might lead to something in the nature of a compromise being reached. He thought we should agree that it could not be wise to leave an open sore, which would prevent friendly relations between the two countries in the future. He might quote as a parallel Bessarabia, which the Soviet Government had deliberately refrained from occupying by force, as they might have done with ease after the war with Poland, when there were 200,000 Red troops of good quality collected at a short distance.

He went on to speak with great bitterness of the Roumanian administration of Bessarabia, citing the case of an officer who had been guilty of a series of atrocious murders, and who, being removed from civil jurisdiction, was unanimously acquitted by a military court in the face of convincing evidence.

During this brief formal interview M. Rakovski said nothing of commercial or other relations with Great Britain.

No. 98.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 16.)*

(No. 432.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Geneva, December 16, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from British delegation:—

“ Substance of my telegram No. 430, except last paragraph, has been telegraphed to Constantinople and Bagdad for confidential information pending presentation of report to Council.”

No. 99.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 16.)*

(No. 435.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Geneva, December 16, 1925.*

FOLLOWING for Prime Minister and Cabinet from Sir Austen Chamberlain and Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

“ Decision to be given at 6. Not yet settled as to whether Brussels line fixed definitely subject to review if we do not make new treaty within given period, or whether fixed conditions come into full effect when we have made treaty. In either case, we both feel it of the greatest importance that there should be debate covering Parliament assent before Christmas, so that Council can be specially convoked for submission of treaty as soon as possible afterwards. Immediate approbation by Parliament and very early conclusion of treaty will produce immense effect on Council, and our best friends urge it strongly for effect on our prestige. Sir Austen Chamberlain, in particular, considers it of first consequence for foreign policy that approval of House of Commons should be given before adjournment.”

No. 100.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 17.)*

(No. 437.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Geneva, December 16, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from British delegation:—

“ Following is text of decision taken by Council unanimously this afternoon:—

“ 1. Frontier between Turkey and Irak shall be as follows: (Here follows geographical description of Brussels line as in Council's resolution of 29th October, 1924.)

“ 2. British Government is invited to submit to Council a new treaty with Irak, ensuring continuance for twenty-five years of mandatory régime defined by treaty of alliance between Great Britain and Irak and by British Government's undertaking approved by Council on 27th September, 1924, unless Irak is, in conformity with article 1 of Covenant, admitted as a member of League before expiry of this period.

“ As soon as—within a period of six months from present date—execution of this stipulation has been brought to the knowledge of the Council, the Council shall declare that present decision has become definitive, and shall indicate measures required to ensure delimitation on the ground of frontier line.

“ 3. British Government, as mandatory Power, is invited to lay before Council the administrative measures which will be taken with a view to securing for Kurdish populations guarantees regarding local administration recommended by commission in its final conclusions.

“ 4. British Government, as mandatory Power, is invited to act as far as possible in accordance with other suggestions of Commission of Enquiry, as regards measures likely to ensure pacification and to afford equal protection to all elements of population, and also as regards commercial measures indicated in special recommendations of commission's report.”

(Sent to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 101.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 17.)*

(No. 438.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Geneva, December 16, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from British delegation:—

“ Council decided at private session immediately after public session at which decision was announced that, if possible, either Czechoslovak or Estonian representative on General Laidoner's mission should remain in Irak, whilst the other came home, subsequently returning to relieve his colleague. If this proved impossible Czechoslovak or Estonian Government, as case might be, would be invited to send substitute. In any case it is contemplated that Czechoslovak representative should remain for three months in first place.”

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 102.

*Consul London to Sir W. Tyrrell.—(Received December 17.)*

(No. 439.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Geneva, December 16, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from British delegation:—

“ Turkish delegation did not attend meeting of Council this afternoon, at beginning of which following letter from Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs was read:—

“ I should like to renew declaration made by Munir Bey to meeting on 8th December with regard to powers of our delegation. I would add

that as all the appeals I have previously made with the object of arriving at an agreement, and with a view to facilitating rôle of mediator and conciliator which we have always recognised to be the rôle of the Council, have had no result, and as the Council has declined to carry out that rôle, I find myself obliged to inform you that my proposals referred to above become *ipso facto* null and void. I desire further to declare that the sovereignty of a State over a territory can only come to an end with the consent of that State, and that therefore our sovereign rights over the whole Vilayet of Mosul remain intact.'

"President of the Council expressed regret at absence of Turks, but pointed out that this could not prevent Council carrying out duties which devolved upon it under article 3 of Treaty of Lausanne."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 103.

*Consul London to Sir Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received December 17.)

(No. 441.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

MY telegram No. 437.

Following is text of statement of Colonial Secretary at meeting of Council:—

"I should like in the first instance to express thanks of His Majesty's Government to Council of League, to Commission of League upon whose report decision of Council has been based, and to General Laidoner and members of his commission whose investigations have elicited facts relevant to the main issue, for all the care which they have given to the consideration of the important and difficult problem before them. I trust that it is not presuming on my part to express the belief that decision based on methods so scrupulous and so impartial will have contributed in no small measure to build up the jurisprudence of peaceful settlement in the world and to the strengthening of authority of the League. His Majesty's Government regret that Council has not been able to accept their proposals for rectification of present frontier, which would have been preferable on strategic and administrative grounds and which would have given security in their own homes to refugees, as the Syrians, as well as to the Goyan Chaldeans whose unhappy fate has been set forth in reports of General Laidoner's commission. But His Majesty's Government on their own behalf and on that of Irak accept decision of Council and will loyally conform to it. I hope to submit at a very early date new treaty whose execution will give final effect to decision announced by Council to-day, as well as to lay before Council proposals for giving effect to recommendations of Commission of Enquiry as regards local administration in Kurdish districts of Irak, pacification and protection of all elements in population, and establishment of liberal system of commercial intercourse between Irak and its neighbours, with whom the one desire of the British and Irak Governments is to live on terms of goodwill and mutual assistance. I observe that decision of Council contains no reference to maintenance of *status quo* pending final effect being given to decision of Council. I presume, in the meantime, provisions of last paragraph of article 3 of Treaty of Lausanne binding each of the parties to observe the *status quo* remain of full effect."

Following is Sir Austen Chamberlain's statement:—

"British Government have no wish to take up rigid or uncompromising attitude towards Turkey. If they have pressed for decision by Council it is only because they believed that until Council had pronounced upon question submitted to it by Treaty of Lausanne it was impossible to find common basis on which to found discussion of an agreement with Turkish Government. British Government most earnestly desire to live on terms of peace and amity with Turkish Government. Council having given its decision, His Majesty's Government will gladly lend itself to conversations with Turkish Government

in order to see whether, while taking due account of decision of Council, it may not be possible to render relations between our two countries easier and safer. With this object in view British Government is ready to take into consideration any proposal made by Turkish Government which is compatible with their duty as mandatory to protect interests of the people of Irak."

(Repeated to Constantinople and Bagdad.)

No. 104.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received December 19.)

(No. 76.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, December 19, 1925.*  
FOLLOWING for Air Ministry from liaison officer:—

"Unconfirmed reports state that 6,000 Turks have moved eastwards by road since beginning of November. French have detained fifty eastward-bound machine guns, Muslime. Mobilisation reported at Islahie."

"Large rebel forces assembling east Rasheya and Hasbeya. Latter town attacked by rebels to-day. Communications between Hasbeya and Judeide cut."

(Repeated to Bagdad and Palestine.)

No. 105.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Sir R. Lindsay (Constantinople).*

(No. 151.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, December 19, 1925.*

SOVIET Ambassador in Paris, in conversation with Lord Crewe on 14th December, spoke of Turkey and critical position of Mosul question.

He said he was anxious to repeat what had already appeared in English press as *démenti*, that no treaty obligations of any kind existed between Russia and Turkey which would oblige the former to support the latter in case of a rupture occurring over the frontier line. Further than that, his Government had no intention of interesting themselves in this question in any form; they were far too much occupied with difficult internal questions to engage in any foreign dispute.

[E 7916/32/65]

No. 106.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Sir Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received December 21.)

(No. 904.)

Sir,

*Constantinople, December 15, 1926.*

I FEEL it to be my painful duty to give you some indication as to the attitude being adopted by the Turkish press on the question of Mosul. I do so with some hesitation, as it is no easy matter to reproduce the Turkish case as presented in the press with sufficient coherence to carry any conviction to a western mind.

2. It is hardly necessary for me to state at the outset that the Turkish press exhibits as little independence of thought on this question as on any of the current questions of internal politics. I have little hesitation, therefore, in attributing the arguments employed there to official inspiration, though at the same time I believe that, within certain limitations, any nonsensical argument is permitted which endeavours to justify the Turkish case, for I can find no trace of articles being written according to a carefully worked out plan, and I imagine that much of the noise about Mosul is intended to cover the real anxiety which is being felt about the unrest in the eastern provinces.

3. The Turkish case, so far as I can follow it, is based on negative arguments. Nothing new has been added by the press to what Tewfik Rushdi and his lieutenant

Munir Bey have stated at Geneva. The only difference is that the press has been allowed to say in so many words that Turkey does not care two straws for the League of Nations, that the latter is simply the tool of England, that The Hague Court is equally at the mercy of British imperialism, and that General Laidoner is one of those British agents whom it is not difficult to find amongst the small States of Europe dependent on British support.

4. I have seen these arguments repeated again and again *ad nauseam*. The main argument adduced to explain this peculiarly hostile attitude of Great Britain to Turkey is the following: The "République" of the 13th December traced at some length the stage-fright which England is suffering from as the result of the awakening of Turkey. England, the writer maintained, is thoroughly alarmed at the sight of the Eastern nations breaking their chains, and the British object in controlling Mosul is to be on the spot in order to exert every influence possible in order to arrest this process and bring Turkey back by every kind of intrigue to her former state of lethargy from which the present régime has freed her. In other words, the possession of Mosul is essential for the policy of modernisation in Turkey.

5. I need hardly stop here to point out how peculiarly foolish this argument is from the Turkish point of view, for the incorporation of an alien Arab population can, if anything, only retard or at any rate increase the difficulties of the Ghazi's policy. But Turkish arguments are not well thought out, and I have little doubt that to readers of these articles one argument is as good as another, provided that England remains the villain of the piece at the end.

6. There is, however, one comforting feature about all this extravagance. I can find little of any direct incitement to a *coup de main* on Mosul. I do not say that this is not in the minds of the writers, but, when they reach this point, they contrive to veil their words in ambiguity and, though they maintain that Turkey will get Mosul, they still leave the reader guessing as to how it will be done.

I have, &c.  
R. C. LINDSAY.

[E 7919/32/65]

No. 107.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 21.)*

(No. 909.)  
Sir,

ON the 12th instant Ismet Pasha made a long speech to the Grand National Assembly on the internal and external affairs of the Turkish Republic. The gist of what he said about internal affairs is reported in my despatch No. 908 of the 15th instant, and I think it right to forward to you herewith the text of what he said on the Mosul question in the remaining part of his speech.\* This text, taken from the "République," is the best available, but it cannot be assumed to be accurate. The Turkish papers publish even longer accounts, but they are so corrupt and badly edited that whole paragraphs are simply incomprehensible.

2. It is extremely difficult and perhaps unnecessary to summarise or reproduce Ismet Pasha's highly elusive arguments. He deals shortly with the question of the rôle of the League Council—whether it should be arbitral or mediatory; and devotes far the greater part of his discourse to General Laidoner's report and the deportation of Nestorians. Though he interposes much matter in regard to Turkey's alleged frontier grievances, the substance of his statement about deportations appears to be that the native Christians compromised themselves in the "rising" of 1924; that their complicity with Irak espionage and recruiting services is proved; and that they have thought it well to escape across the frontier.

3. Perhaps the most noticeable thing about this speech is its general tone, which is distinctly subdued. So far from being a trumpet call to action, it is the speech of a Minister trying to persuade his Parliament that he has done all that could be done. Of what is happening just now at Geneva the newspapers give only confused accounts, but it is made to appear that a verdict by the Council substantially in favour of the British thesis is to be expected; yet there is an atmosphere of

\* Not printed.

*détente*, which has been noticed by at least two of my diplomatic colleagues here, who have no knowledge of the language you used to the Turkish Ambassador in London on the 4th instant.

4. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's High Commissioner for Irak.

I have, &c.  
R. C. LINDSAY.

No. 108.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 21.)*

(No. 146.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Constantinople, December 20, 1925.*

MOSUL.

League's decision has been a great disappointment to the Turkish Government, who even up to the last moment hoped for some postponement or for an advance by His Majesty's Government towards direct negotiation. Tone of press is extremely bitter. Spender, of "Westminster Gazette," who has just returned from Angora, tells me that Turks regard decision as a severe blow to internal prestige of the Government.

Nevertheless, I cannot at present see or hear of any symptoms of immediate danger.

I infer from your declaration at Geneva (your telegram No. 27 from Geneva) that you expect Turkish Government to take the initiative in any conversation now to take place about adjustments. If so, I feel bound to warn you that in my opinion Turkish Government in its present very bitter mood will find it impossible to take any first step at all; yet I feel that if conversations are to take place it is important that there should be no undue delay about beginning them.

If you are willing to prevent a deadlock from arising, I suggest that you send for Turkish Ambassador and tell him that if the Turkish Government desire any direct discussions to take place you are ready to send me to Angora for the purpose.

(Repeated to Bagdad.)

[E 7981/32/65]

No. 109.

*Speeches delivered by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in the House of Commons on December 21, 1925.*

IRAK.

THE PRIME MINISTER: I beg to move—

"That this House approves the action taken by the representatives of His Majesty's Government at Geneva in accepting the award of the Council of the League of Nations on the Irak boundary."

This motion which has been put on the paper deals only with the approval which I ask the House to give to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for the Colonies for their recent action at Geneva in accepting, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the award of the Council of the League of Nations on the question of the Irak boundary. Their action in this matter has, however, only been a continuation of action taken by a series of successive Governments, and the approval of the House, if given, should in equity include our predecessors as well as ourselves. The undertaking to accept the award of the League, as deciding the question of the Irak frontier, was given in the first instance by Lord Curzon when he signed the Treaty of Lausanne two years ago, and by my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition when he was responsible for the ratification of that treaty in the following year. The undertaking was explicitly renewed at Geneva by Lord Parmoor in September last year on behalf of the late Government.

That undertaking does not stand by itself as a particular policy adopted by us with reference to a particular dispute. It is only one instance of the application of a principle to which all parties have been committed ever since the Covenant of the League of Nations was included in the Treaty of Versailles—I mean the principle

of extending the use of the League of Nations as an instrument for the peaceful settlement of international difference and strengthening, by our support, its authority for that purpose. Hon. and right hon. members who recently were sitting opposite were prepared to give that principle a much wider application than we believe to be practicable. They were ready to enter into a protocol by which they would have engaged this country, not only to submit all possible disputes of its own to arbitration, but also to go to war with any other country which did not fulfil a similar obligation, however remote the conflict might be from any conceivable British interests. We have been less ambitious, but we have, in the Treaty of Locarno, applied the same principle to the settlement of all possible disputes affecting a particular frontier in which we are profoundly interested. The present instance is one of an even more restricted character. It affects the settlement of one particular dispute, expressly referred to the League in a treaty barely a year old. If we were to reject the application of that principle to so clearly defined and limited an issue, what real value would the world attach to our general professions of our desire to strengthen the machinery of the League of Nations; and if we weaken the authority of the League in so explicit a case submitted to them, how are we to rely on that authority in future to give real effect, in some wholly unforeseen crisis, to the Treaties of Locarno or any other treaties which may develop on similar lines?

It is for these reasons that I regard this motion as, in effect, one of general approval of the whole attitude which successive Governments have taken up, not only on the Irak frontier question, but on even wider issues, and I venture to express the hope that it may have the unanimous support of this House. I do not, in making that suggestion, wish for a moment to suggest that this House should be committed by to-night's discussion to the actual terms of the treaty which we will endeavour to conclude with the Irak Government in pursuance of the award. While the power to ratify such a treaty is one which, constitutionally, does not depend on the vote of this House, we have no intention of ratifying the proposed treaty until the House at its reassembly has had an opportunity of discussing, far more adequately than it could to-night, the actual provisions of that document. It is only the general principle of the acceptance of the award of the League that I am asking the House to confirm to-night, and it will be confirmed, I trust, in such a manner as will most effectively show the genuineness of our determination to pursue the policy of sustaining the authority of the League as an instrument of world peace. It is, I know, alleged that the conditions coupled with this award are conditions which involve both the assumption for a very long period of time of unnecessary costly and dangerous commitments, and the violation of assurances and pledges given by this House with regard to the termination of our responsibilities in Irak. Let me deal first briefly with the latter accusation. I have been charged again and again, mainly in certain organs of the press, with having broken a definite pledge given by myself on the 3rd May, 1923, that we should wash our hands for good and all of any responsibility for or interest in Irak after August 1928. As evidence of that pledge, they have reproduced in type of every conceivable magnitude one or two sentences out of a statement made in Bagdad by Sir Percy Cox which I read out to the House as embodying the policy of His Majesty's Government. These sentences run as follows:—

" Both parties being equally anxious that the commitments and responsibilities of His Majesty's Government in respect of Irak should be terminated as soon as possible, it is considered that the period of the treaty in its present form can conveniently be shortened. . . . It is understood that the present treaty shall terminate upon Irak becoming a member of the League of Nations, and in any case not later than four years from the ratification of peace with Turkey."

I wonder how many of those who have read these sentences, reproduced by themselves apart from their context, as a statement of our policy at that time have realised that the very next sentence of that declaration—which I also read out in this House—went on to say:—

" Nothing in this protocol shall prevent a fresh agreement from being concluded with a view to regulate the subsequent relations between the high contracting parties; and negotiations for that object shall"—  
not "may"—

" be entered into between them before the expiration of the above period."—  
("Official Report," the 3rd May, 1923; cols. 1598-1599, vol. 163).

In other words, the protocol, which brings the existing treaty to an end in 1928, definitely pledges us to endeavour, before 1928, to replace it by another treaty for the future. There is another obligation which the Government—any British Government—has to keep in view, and that is the obligation towards our fellow-members in the community of nations, the obligation which we undertook when we accepted a mandate for Irak. It is too late in the day now to go back on that and to ask ourselves whether, in the first place, we were wise to accept that mandate or not. That was done. But having undertaken the mandate, with the approval of this House, no mandatory is entitled simply to throw up his mandate and leave chaos in its place.

The termination of a mandate, as well as its establishment, is a matter in which the League of Nations is directly interested, and with regard to which it has a right to be consulted. This was fully recognised by our successors in office, and when they, in September 1924, submitted the treaty with Irak in its present shortened form to the League as a fulfilment of our mandatory obligations towards the League, they definitely undertook that if the treaty came to an end before Irak was admitted to the membership of the League, we would invite the Council of the League to decide what further measures would be required to give effect to article 22 of the Covenant. That meant, and it is so interpreted in the report to the Council of the League, on which its present decision has been taken, that if Irak was not admitted to membership of the League by August 1928, then the British Government was pledged to the League after 1928 until such time as Irak was considered eligible for admission to the League, to make such provision as the Council would approve of for continuing to fulfil its mandatory obligations to the League in respect of Irak.

There has really been no inconsistency, let alone breach of faith, in the policy pursued by successive Governments in this matter. They have all been, as we are to-day, determined that the period during which the British taxpayer should be burdened with expenditure upon Irak should come to an end as soon as possible. We laid down a definite date by which we intended that this expenditure and the special military liabilities bound up with it should come to an end, and we believe we can substantially fulfil our intentions in this respect, but neither the Government of which I was head in 1923, nor the Labour Government which succeeded us, contemplated that the special connection between ourselves and Irak should or could come to an end in 1928, either in our relationships towards Irak or in our relationship towards the League of Nations unless we were able before that date to prove that Irak had reached a position of stability in government which would justify her admission into the League of Nations.

That brings me to the second charge, that we are unnecessarily undertaking now costly and dangerous obligations in respect of Irak. I think I have already made it clear that those obligations are not new but are only giving effect at a somewhat earlier date to undertakings which we have given both to Irak and to the League of Nations in respect of our relations with that country, if by 1928 she has not entered the League of Nations; and at this point I should like, with the permission of the House, to read them a short statement of policy which has guided and is guiding the Government in this very difficult matter. Acting on this statement of policy, the Foreign Secretary and the Colonial Secretary did their work in Geneva.

The undertaking we have given is not for a definite twenty-five years, but for what I believe, as the Secretary of State for the Colonies stated to the Council, will be a far shorter period, namely, until such time as we can make it clear to the League of Nations that Irak has acquired the stability which justifies its admission to membership of the League. It is not an undertaking to spend money on, or to keep troops in, Irak, either for the maintenance of internal order or for its defence against external aggression, but to continue our co-operation and advice in maintaining a stable system of government.

It may be asked what will be our responsibility for the defence of Irak if, after the expiration of the present treaty, that country should be attacked by any foreign Power. It is obvious that the responsibility which we should have towards Irak if, as a fellow-member of the League of Nations, she were the victim of unprovoked aggression, would certainly not be diminished by any treaty relationship with us which continued our mandatory position, but the League itself has a special responsibility towards a State over which it exercises a mandatory supervision, and if the aggression in question were directed to the forcible overthrow of the boundary fixed by the Council of the League itself, the responsibility of the League, as the authority directly challenged and affronted, would obviously be the primary and

dominant one. Our responsibility in any future situation must necessarily depend on the circumstances of that situation. The action which we should take and the measure and extent of any support which we might give in a particular case cannot be fixed in advance or be a matter of prior obligation. They must be determined by the Government of the day, if ever the case arises, in the light of the then existing circumstances of world peace and the general interests of the Empire.

I will say a word or two on that statement. The conditions which the League has laid down do not affect in any way our policy in making Irak stand on its own feet in respect to its expenditure or the provision for its external and internal security. These are matters as between ourselves and Irak, with which the League does not concern itself, any more than it concerns itself with the expenditure or with the military measures taken by ourselves or by any other mandatory Power in other mandated territories. The conditions are those contained in our existing obligations to the League, as covered by the present treaty and by the assurances given last year to the Council by our predecessors. They refer in the main to certain general principles of administration which are already in force in Irak, and all that the Council wishes to secure is that we should continue our co-operation and advice in maintaining a stable system of government in accordance with those principles.

The House itself will be able to judge of the precise extent of the obligations involved in accepting the conditions of the League when it has the actual terms of the new treaty before it, and it can then judge whether it will or will not endorse the policy of the Government in respect of that treaty. I can say this, at any rate, that the conditions laid down by the League in no way commit us to spend money on or to keep troops in Irak beyond the term of the present treaty expiring in 1928. The last sentences which I read of the statement of policy answer a hypothetical question, that is, the question of a possible invasion of Irak, and I must insist that it is a purely hypothetical question. We have been engaged in completing a Treaty of Peace, and the line we have taken is the one which, I believe, is the one best calculated to preserve permanent peace in the Middle East. Our one desire is that all the nations and States of that part of the world, not only the young Irak nation, for which we hold a special responsibility, but also our former Turkish adversaries, should recover in peace from the ravages of the war, and under new conditions reach a higher level of prosperity than before.

We are only too anxious that Irak should live in relations of neighbourly amity and co-operation with Turkey. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has already, at Geneva, given expression to his readiness to endeavour to find ways and means, consistent with the fulfilment of our obligations towards Irak, of arriving at some such agreement as will build, upon the League's recognition of Irak's just claim for the retention of her territory, the superstructure of a mutually acceptable and binding settlement, and, in order to give effect without delay to that statement of the Foreign Secretary, I am inviting the Turkish Ambassador to meet me to-morrow to pursue this question. For this task we need the support of a united country, and I would in all seriousness appeal to those who have criticised our policy so vehemently in public to consider whether the prospects of a peaceful and friendly settlement will be improved or damaged by an agitation which consistently misrepresents the policy which we are pursuing, and which is calculated outside this country to create doubt both as to our resolution to honour our obligations and as to the sincerity of our desire for peace.

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS (Mr. Amery): The speech to which we have just listened is, I think, typical of the calm tone in which this subject has been discussed this evening. It has been thoughtful and considerate, in some instances absolutely frigid, and it would appear that this assembly has not been unmindful of its great imperial responsibilities. That tone is very different, indeed, from the tone in which this question has been discussed in certain quarters outside. The Prime Minister, in his statement, made it clear that so far as our attitude in accepting the award of the League of Nations was concerned and the conditions with which that award was coupled, it was only the attitude which every successive Government has taken up on this question since the matter of the Irak frontier was first raised by the Turks three years ago.

My right hon. friend opposite has asked me to say something on the broader question of the position in Irak. The policy that the present Government is pursuing is only the policy which every Government has pursued since the war.

It is not we who were first confronted with the problem, the grave, anxious problem of the responsibilities which we took in Irak during the war. The pledges and assurances which were given at various stages of the war have been quoted in this House on more than one occasion. Some of them have been quoted to-night. I do not think it is necessary for me to quote them, and I shall sum them up in a phrase used by Lord Curzon at Lausanne in January 1923. Lord Curzon then said:—

"The British Government are under a very definite pledge, first of all to the Arab nation, to whom they promised that they should not be returned to Turkish rule; secondly, that to the Arab kingdom shall be annexed the whole country, including Mosul, and with whom we have entered into an obligation; and thirdly, to the League of Nations, without whose consent we cannot abandon our mandate over large portions of mandated territory."

Those obligations may be unfortunate; so must other forms of obligation. But we cannot afford to dishonour them. The problem which has been before us ever since the armistice is how we should discharge those obligations honourably without at the same time imposing on the taxpayers of this country burdens wholly beyond their capacity to bear. That is a problem which is not a new one. The right hon. gentleman the Member for West Swansea (Mr. Runciman) gave us his views of certain anxieties in this matter. They were shared by those members of his own party who took part in the Coalition Government, and who were confronted with the problem then. They were faced with impossible expenditure in the occupation of Irak. Figures have been quoted freely, I know, which are intrinsically absurd. We have been told that Irak has cost £175 million. That is a figure which includes the vast expenditure on demobilisation which we had to incur there just as much as we had to incur many tens of millions of the same kind of expenditure in France, Italy and other places. It also included the heavy cost of an unfortunate rebellion. Even so, it is undoubtedly true that the administration of Irak was imposing an altogether unduly burdensome task upon the British taxpayer.

The Coalition Government was the first to make an attempt to go into the matter. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer when he occupied the post that I hold to-day went out to the East to see what it was that made the position in Irak so difficult and so costly. He found out that there were two causes which affected Irak. One was the attempt we were making contrary to the spirit of our pledges, we were endeavouring to impose upon Irak a system of administration unsuited to the conditions of the country, profoundly unpopular with the people and essentially and inherently costly. With great courage and with great insight my right hon. friend grappled with that problem. He decided on the military side that our great forces there should be resolutely reduced, and the main burden and responsibility for the maintenance of internal and external security of the country should be laid on the new, and for that purpose, the untried weapon of the air force.

He also decided that we should sweep away the system of Turkish administration, and substitute for it a system of the free co-operation of the people of the country and the trusted members of their own Government, and with their own support and their own free constitution, we should support and help and guide them through the medium of a treaty of alliance. A treaty, from the point of view of Irak, was that to which they were more susceptible, and in which they would take more pride, and at the same time, so far as our obligations to the League of Nations was concerned, would carry out all the essential elements of our mandatory obligation. That was the situation in 1921. In the following year that treaty was signed between the British Government and the Government of Irak.

There was a change of Government. A new Government had to face a new situation. The situation at the beginning of 1923 was graver than at any time before or since. We were confronted with a Turkey flushed with victory and not yet occupied with the many problems of internal reorganisation imposed on the civilised world. We were confronted with a new state of affairs in Irak. In face of that situation a new Prime Minister (Mr. Bonar Law) asked his Cabinet to face the whole situation from the beginning. For months we discussed the problem, asking ourselves whether it might be possible to solve it by abandoning our responsibilities in Irak. We studied the problem. We came quite definitely to the conclusion that any immediate withdrawal from Irak would not only be more costly but, from a military point of view, more difficult to achieve; it would involve the downfall of the kingdom of Irak, and consequently be regarded throughout the

Eastern world as a breach of faith towards Irak, and that such a measure would inflict irreparable damage on British honour and prestige throughout the East. That was the view taken by the Government which approached this problem in a sceptical spirit, for it was only too anxious to get rid of obligations which they thought irksome.

But when they studied the problem they came to the same conclusion as their predecessors, namely, that it was not to be solved by any short cut, not by scuttling or running away, but by the result of a manful endeavour to build up as rapidly as possible in Irak and by the help of the people of the country a condition of things which would enable Irak to stand on its own feet, and by so doing enable us to discharge our obligations and to regard our responsibilities as fulfilled. In discussing that problem the Cabinet did consider very seriously how soon the financial and military commitments which we had undertaken in Irak could honourably and safely be brought to an end. The treaty which had been signed was one of twenty years, and the military and financial agreement attached to it and extending to the same period did stipulate expressly that Irak should, at the earliest possible date, accept full responsibility, both for the maintenance of internal order and for the defence of Irak from external aggression. But, on the other hand, beyond that general situation, no definite date within the twenty years' currency of the treaty had been laid down for the fulfilment of these essential conditions.

To remove the not unnatural apprehension which that created in the House of Commons at the time, the Cabinet came to the conclusion that the treaty, whose ratification it considered could not honourably be withheld, should be supplemented by a protocol which terminated the main provisions of the treaty, and, more particularly, our military and financial obligations, within a much shorter period, but which at the same time, as the Prime Minister made abundantly clear earlier to-day, expressly laid down that negotiations should be entered into for the conclusion of a future treaty embodying our permanent relations, when they should become relations of mutual assistance and help and no longer a purely one-sided dependence on the part of Irak on this country. That was the attitude taken up by the former Unionist Government.

But, as the Prime Minister pointed out this afternoon, that attitude was equally the attitude of the Labour Government that succeeded. When they had to face, not only their obligations towards Irak, but their obligations towards the League of Nations, they gave—I may mention that a right hon. member of this House on the Liberal side was one of the representatives of His Majesty's Government on that occasion, I mean the right hon. Member for the English Universities (Mr. H. Fisher)—he and Lord Parmoor together gave an assurance to the League of Nations that if Irak had not entered the League by 1928, then the Government of this country would leave it to the League to decide what further measures might be required for carrying out a mandatory responsibility. In the face of that assurance, given, not by a Government on this side but by a Government which for the moment does not grace the Labour benches opposite, it is really difficult to understand the meaning of the motion on the paper in the name of the right hon. gentleman who should be opposite:—

"That in the opinion of this House the period for which this country assumed responsibility for Irak should not be prolonged."

Why? Only a year ago they pledged themselves to the League of Nations that they would prolong that responsibility. I am not surprised, in view of that fact, that they prefer to avoid having to explain the discrepancy between the motion they have put on the paper and the resolution which, by their own record, they are bound to support.

A question which my right hon. friend opposite has asked is, how is that policy of successive Governments actually working in Irak? I had the privilege a few months ago, in company with my right hon. friend the Secretary for Air, to visit Irak, in order that we might try to see for ourselves how that policy was working, and how the progressive reduction of expenditure which that policy contemplated was being carried out, and how, if possible, it could be accelerated.

We found that that policy, laid down by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer and carried on by successive Governments, is a policy that is working. We found that, as regards defence, in spite of the enormous reduction of forces, complete peace and order prevailed from one end of that country to the other; that the air force, with a small but keen and efficient police, with administration under-

stood by the people, had established a state of affairs that that country had not known for a thousand years. I do not think that anyone who has been there could fail to be proud of the work which the air force has done in Irak. I venture to say that that air force, for its keenness, for efficiency all round, for continuous flying experience, is a force the like of which does not exist in the world elsewhere. And that success has been achieved consistently with a continuous and rapid reduction of expenditure.

May I give the House a few figures to show how progressive the reduction has been. In the year 1920-21 we were spending £32 million a year in Irak. In 1921-22 the figure was £23 million. In 1922-23, after the new policy had begun to take effect, the figure had been brought below £8 million; in the following year below £6 million; and in the year after that below £4,750,000. The current estimates are a little over £4 million. That is expenditure in Irak. But it is not by any means all expenditure on Irak. The House of Commons knows perfectly well that we spend very large sums in Malta for the navy. We do not credit those sums as the cost of Malta to the imperial taxpayer. For the sake of effecting these reductions the present Chancellor of the Exchequer four years ago put all expenditure in Irak upon the Middle Eastern Vote. Of the present expenditure of £4 million, about half is actual expenditure on Irak, expenditure which need not recur once Irak is capable of taking it upon its own shoulders; and the other £2 million represents expenditure upon that wonderful air weapon which is at this moment being maintained in that particular area.

I do not think that anyone will suggest that if it were not maintained there the whole of it would disappear or simply be incorporated in our home defence. A great part of it, at any rate, would be required somewhere in those regions, and I confess that I know of no part of the Middle East where it could be maintained in such efficiency and in so central and effective a position. Be that as it may, the conviction with which the Secretary of State for Air and I came back from that visit was that, given a settlement to the frontier question, given security and a permanent policy, we should be able to make greater and progressive reductions during the next two years, and be able to arrive, by the time laid down in the present treaty, or at any rate very nearly within that time, at a stage when Irak no longer required financial or military support and the imperial taxpayer, and when it could stand on its own feet and pay its own way.

That is the military position. I may add that Irak is perhaps a little nearer to that, in its own way, than is usually realised. It pays the whole cost of the civil administration, pays for the whole of the force of 7,000 police and for a rapidly growing and improving army of 8,000 men, and within a very few years will be able to take over the whole of the ground expenditure now incurred in that country, and, I believe also, pay towards whatever air expenditure is required for the actual security of the country itself. I have given credit to the air force for what was done, not undeservedly. I should like to add that its success cannot be dissociated from the success of the political policy that has been followed under the guidance of men like Sir Percy Cox and Sir Henry Dodd, who understand the people of the country and who like the people of the country, aided by a little handful of British officials. We have built up a machinery for native self-government in that country which, I venture to say, we here, in this old country, can well be proud of.

Nothing, even in the early days of Egypt, in the time of Lord Cromer or Lord Milner, equals the fine, noble work that little body of British officials have done out there, with very little recognition, with no certainty of tenure for themselves, with a sense of duty towards the country in which they were working, and applied for the Empire on whose behalf they filled its lonely outposts. They have worked in a spirit which I believe may avoid some of the mistakes we made in Egypt in the earlier days, in a spirit which has done marvels, not only in peace and security, but in health and sanitation, and education, and which has aimed at doing it, not by the supersession of the native administration, but by a true spirit of brotherly co-operation. Nothing more interested me than what I saw of the real whole-hearted friendship and co-operation between the Irak officials in the country and the British counsellors and advisers, who worked by their side, and never lost an opportunity of giving them full chance of doing the work.

We may be asked, Is that system of government stable? The commission set up by the League of Nations were inclined to doubt its permanency. I believe it has already made far more progress towards real stability than anyone here realises. It has the making of a true national life, patriotic, keen, and yet tolerant, in that

country, and you have there a people who are really anxious to make their way. I know that the financial position is still a difficulty. The burden of the Ottoman debt imposed upon Irak is not a small thing for a struggling little country to tackle, but I am convinced that Irak will not only pay its way during the next few years, but will steadily shoulder, as I have already said, the burdens that we are carrying for her.

From the economic point of view, I entirely agree with what fell from my right hon. friend opposite. It is a country capable of immense results. After all, it is one of the richest and most powerful countries in the world. The City of Bagdad, as those said who sacked it 700 years ago, contained more people than the whole of the country contains, and if Irak is derelict, was not Egypt fairly derelict fifty years ago when we first took it in hand? Is there any prophecy about the futility of our attempts to bring about regeneration in Irak which was not made by critics about Egypt in those days? The whole system of irrigation has been allowed to fail; great tracts of land want draining; great capital expenditure may be required before the rivers of Paradise can be harnessed and made fruitful for us; but it can be done, and nothing will bring that nearer our security than a clear knowledge of our intentions. A very true word was said by the hon. and gallant Member for Warwick and Leamington (Captain Eden) when he said that the more we develop the country, the speedier will the day come when we can clear off that obligation altogether.

There is one other economic point which I might mention in that connection, because it is alluded to so often by more than one hon. Member in a wholly misleading sense, and that is the part that the development of oil will play in the future prosperity of the country. I need not repeat that no interest of any sort directly concerned with oil has influenced the policy of the British Government, or of any British Government. That is undoubtedly true. If oil should be discovered in considerable quantities, it will undoubtedly bring development and revenue to the country. The contract between the Turkish Petroleum Company and the Irak Government is a more favourable contract to a Government than any oil contract I know of elsewhere, and if—and the matter is not yet proved—oil should be proved, then the Irak Government may get an increase of revenue which will enable it to find the money for dealing usefully with that far more important liquid—the water of the country, the irrigation.

Another thing we found when out there was that all development was waiting to know clearly what our intentions were. On every hand by the people of Irak and our officials we were asked: "Is it the intention of the Government to carry out the pledges given in the protocol, and after 1928 to remain in treaty alliance and in co-operation with Irak or not?"

On the question of the mandate, I should like—I trust I am not trespassing too long—to say something. When the war came to an end with the armistice we were a few miles out of Mosul. We had occupied the greater part of Irak. In accordance with the terms of the armistice, we occupied Mosul itself, and the rest of what was Mesopotamia up to what was the natural frontier of Irak. We advanced to the mountain range, the natural, geographical, commercial and racial frontier of Turkey. We made no attempt to advance an inch into anything which could be considered Turkish territory in any proper sense of the word. From that time on Irak has been, within its present frontier, regarded as a unit, both by the world outside and by its own people. All the arrangements between the Great Powers and the League of Nations for the assignment and establishment of a mandate dealt with the country in its present territory. The present frontiers substantially were accepted by Turkey in the Treaty of Sèvres, signed in August 1920.

LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER KENWORTHY: Not by Turkey, but by the Sultan.

MR. AMERY: The Government of the Sultan was then the legal Government of Turkey. I shall come later to the new revolutionary Government, which took its place, and which repudiated it; but, in any case, that Government accepted that frontier. Internally, Irak has been a unit from that time. It is an economic unit, as the commission of the League clearly showed. Its whole trade works together, and Bagdad and Mosul naturally work together on a single trade system. It took part as a single country in the election of its present Parliament, and in the election of the Constituent Assembly which framed the Constitution under which it lives; and in the election of the present Assembly it has declared its desire to remain in treaty relationship with us; and it has developed as a single unit on lines of progressive

administration which in a few years have made it an utterly different country either from what Irak was before the war or from what any part of the Turkish country is to-day.

The Turkish demands, which would take away from Irak an essential and integral part of its territory, the richest of its provinces, is essentially a demand for a complete reversal of the order of things set up after the war, not only territorially, but because it entirely reverses the spirit of a settlement on national and racial lines on which its system since the war has been based. For that claim there is no justification from the point of view of defence. The present frontier is an admirable defensive frontier from the Turkish point of view, as it is from our own. There is no justification from the point of view of race. There are practically no Turks in that province. A little scattered island of Turkomans, kindred in race and language, live at the other end of the province, most remote from the frontier.

There is no case, either, to be founded on the wishes of the inhabitants; the last thing the people of Irak wish is to be put back under Turkish rule. More than that, there is no legal claim for the restoration to Turkey. I want to dwell on that point, because it is one which has been so systematically misrepresented in some of the presses. The commission of the League pointed out, in what I cannot conceive to be very happy legal phraseology, that till the final Treaty of Peace settled the frontiers the original sovereignty of Turkey, in some sense, still subsisted over all the regions that had belonged to her. The Hague Court, a legal authority which I think no one in this House will query, put the thing more correctly when it said that under article 16 of the Treaty of Lausanne Turkey had renounced all rights and claims outside the frontiers laid down in the treaty, and that, in respect of the Irak frontier, pending the actual fixing of the frontier, that renunciation was still, in a certain measure, in suspense.

It will no longer remain in suspense when we have carried out the conditions which the League has coupled with its award, and from that moment all shadow of Turkish suzerainty will disappear. Whatever that shadow may be, it extends to Mosul no more than it does to Bagdad or Basra. The legal right of Irak to Mosul is in every respect as good as the right to Bagdad. In face of these facts it is interesting to notice in the hysterical press this morning the statement that our presence in Mosul is an offence against justice. I venture to say that that statement is an offence against truth, and an offence truly characteristic of the systematic and deliberate misrepresentation of a campaign which I confess seems to me to be only intelligible on one motive, that of wishing to incite Turkey to war with this country.

I think I have made it clear that the claim on the part of Turkey to reverse the system of the war and the system established since the war has no justification, but, however little justified it might have been, I can assure this House that the Government of this country, with its many responsibilities, would not have been afraid of negotiating or offering a compromise with regard to that claim if we thought it would improve the relations between the two countries. But the facts are such that any concession to an unjustified claim would be impossible. The present frontier is the one easily defensible frontier in the country, and any frontier drawn back from the present one would be an indefensible one, and one which would involve Irak and us in much heavier military expenditure. At the same time, to go back would deprive Irak of some of its richest territory and best roads, and would leave that country crippled in her resources with a much heavier task before her. Therefore, any retreat from the present frontier is one that, so far from lightening the burdens of the taxpayers, would increase them, and would defer for many years a period which we hope will soon come when Irak will stand on its own. It would mean more than that. It would mean an injustice to the State of Irak, and it would mean a great injustice to the peoples whose interests we should have to sacrifice more immediately.

Does anyone think that the people who now enjoy a certain measure of political toleration, who can appoint their own local officers and use their own language, would welcome the steam roller of the uniform levelling Turkish machine across the border? Does anyone think the Arabs would wish to be reduced to the level of a Turkish provincial town? Again, we have a responsibility, and a very definite responsibility, towards the 70,000 or 80,000 Christians in that province which is immediately up against our frontier. I think most hon. members have read the White Paper which gives the story of the manner in which certain deportations were carried out across the frontier. It is a horrible story. I am not going to trespass upon the feelings of the House by repeating anything that is contained in that terrible indictment; but, after all, have we any right to expose the people whom we liberated, to

whom we have given a measure of freedom, self-government and toleration that they have never known before, to a return to that state of things?

I am not one of those who think that it is the duty of this nation to carry on a crusade in every part of the world. Terrible things have happened in many parts that we were powerless to prevent, and with which we could not have dealt except at the cost of creating worse disasters. But here are responsibilities which we have undertaken, and which we are in honour bound to carry out, and in that case I think we are entitled to let some weight rest in the scale of our responsibility towards a people who enjoy happiness and freedom, but who might suffer unspeakable misery if any change were made. One thing that is certain is that if we gave up that territory these hapless people would come down to us as refugees, and we should be forced to spend vast sums in sustaining them. We have already spent millions after the war in sustaining refugees, and I do not think we wish to be faced with that burden again.

I venture to think that the claim which is put forward that we should reverse the whole present system in Irak is one that we are bound to resist. We might quite well have stood on the frontier and refused to enter into any commitment; but we took a different and, I believe, a better course. We showed our faith in the justice of our cause, and our desire to promote the principle of peaceful settlement, by submitting the whole of that question to the arbitrament of the League. That was the original view embodied in the Treaty of Lausanne; that was the view of the Labour Government which followed, and it was not we, but the Labour Government, who after spending a certain number of months in endeavouring to arrive at a direct settlement with Turkey, during which negotiations they steadfastly refused to make any concession which would, from their point of view, prejudice the safety or the well-being of Irak—it was they who referred the matter to the League in September 1924, and definitely announced that they pledged themselves beforehand to accept the judgment of the League. I may add that, on that occasion at any rate, the Turkish representative equally pledged his Government to obey the decision of the League. It was on the strength of that assurance that the commission of the League was sent out. That pledge has been repudiated since—unwisely, as I think—but it still stands on record as what Turkey believed to be the situation only a year ago.

It was on the strength of these assurances that the League sent out its commission of three. That commission reported very much what I laid before the House just now—that the Province of Mosul belonged naturally to Irak, and that its people wished to remain united with it. The commission was also profoundly impressed by what impressed myself and the Secretary of State for Air, namely, the wish of every section of the people of the country that British influence and guidance should remain associated with the Government of Irak. It was for that reason that they coupled, with their recommendation that Irak should remain intact, a stipulation that the present state of affairs, the present influence and guidance upon the course of Irak policy, should continue for a long period of years.

That may be an inconvenient and awkward condition to attach, but, surely, it is a great compliment to the work that England has done in Irak. Was ever such a compliment paid to a nation before by a body of neutral visitors as the statement that the stability and prosperity of the people of that country, from the point of view of the wishes of the people themselves, were coupled with continuous help and support from a foreign Power? That recommendation of the commission did face the Government of this country with a very direct question, whether it did in fact mean to carry out the treaty with Irak and the declaration the last Government made at the Council of the League a year ago. Now my right hon. friend says that was a rather irrelevant and unfair question. I am not sure. They were asked to settle the frontier in the interest of the people concerned, and they believed that interest would be best served by the present frontier and by the present political co-operation of the British in Irak.

When the question was put, what possible answer could there be? Let me remind the House that we had pledged ourselves both to Irak and to the League to continue in treaty relations after the present treaty expired. Let me also remind the House that by the whole course of our policy we are pledged to support Irak's claim to its present territory—not this Government only, but the right hon. gentleman the member for Derby (Mr. Thomas), the late Colonial Secretary, in July of last year had it publicly announced in Bagdad and throughout Irak that His Majesty's Government had no intention whatever of abandoning their support to the frontier claim which had been brought forward on behalf of Irak at Constantinople. What answer could we give? We were pledged to prolong the treaty. We were pledged to

support the claim of Irak. Was I, on behalf of the British Government, to say to Irak, "We are bound by two pledges, one to continue in treaty relationship with you after 1928, the other to defend your frontier"?

We are prepared to refuse to honour the first pledge in order that we may have an excuse for dishonouring the second. Or was I to go to the League of Nations and say, "The late Government pledged itself to continue mandatory relations with Irak if necessary. We believe a certain decision which you wish to give to be the only just and fair one, but we will go back on the pledge of our predecessors in order to enable you to give a decision which we know to be unjust, which we know will be disastrous to the people concerned, which we know will wreck the future of the young State we have been building up under the auspices of the League, and which we also know will for all time make it impossible for this country to get quit of its responsibilities in Irak either with honour or with advantage."

That at any rate was not the answer my right hon. friend and the Cabinet instructed me to give. I gave the answer I gave on the 3rd September to the League of Nations, that we were prepared, within the maximum limit of twenty-five years—I made it quite clear I believed Irak would be ready for admission to the League of Nations long before that, and indeed the period was mentioned by the League not as a probable or certain period of the termination of our responsibilities but as a maximum period. I said then that for the maximum period we were prepared to continue our co-operation in maintaining the present administrative system in that country. I gave that declaration then. It was not asked of me again on the present occasion because, instead of that, the Council of the League adhered to its decision, and made that obligation a condition of the award.

The right hon. gentleman the Member for West Swansea (Mr. Runciman) asked whether we were not in fact free to reject the award. I say in one sense we are free to reject it, coupled with the condition that there may be some other award which the League can give. What I do say is that any other award would be disastrous for Irak and this country, and the refusal of its conditions would be going back directly upon the whole policy which every Government has pursued in this country since the war.

May I turn to the actual obligations which the League demands? The Prime Minister has made it abundantly clear that those obligations are not concerned with the question of what money we spend in Irak, or whether we spend any money there at all. It has nothing to do and interferes in no way with the fulfilment of our policy of reducing expenditure in Irak to a minimum, and, indeed, to vanishing point in the next few years. It has nothing to do with the question of what troops we maintain in Irak.

That, again, is one of those questions which the League of Nations never dreams of asking of any mandatory Power in regard to any territory. These are matters of our own responsibility. When it comes to the question of the future defence of that country, that is hypothetical, as the Prime Minister pointed out. Under the terms of the military agreement attached to the present treaty, we are, undoubtedly, directly bound as allies to assist in the defence of Irak against external aggression up to August 1928. As regards the situation afterwards, I think the Prime Minister made it perfectly clear what that situation would be. If Irak were a perfect and independent State, a member of the League of Nations, we should have a certain obligation to prevent its territory from being wantonly violated.

If the League of Nations means anything, it means that all nations in the League are bound to take some action in case of unwarrantable and unprovoked aggression. Certainly that obligation would not be the less during the years in which, on behalf of the rest of the League of Nations, we acted as mandatories in Irak. In that case, as the Prime Minister made clear, the obligation which we have is one in which the League of Nations is associated with us, and associated with us in a particular sense in respect of a violation of the decision which the League of Nations has come to in regard to the boundaries. In any case, in matters of that sort one cannot deal with hypothetical questions of the defence of any country in an unforeseen circumstance. We have world-wide interests and there are many places where we could neither say to-day that we shall spring to their aid if they are attacked, with unlimited troops, nor that we shall regard invasion of their territory as a matter of indifference. These are matters which must depend upon the circumstances at the time.

I believe that when we have settled this question, when Irak is allowed to develop itself within its natural frontiers, the frontiers of natural political equilibrium, that part of the problem will not present itself again. After all, I

believe that what we are concerned with in this matter, and that is what the League of Nations is concerned with, is not the problem of defence against some hypothetical attack, but with certain general principles of administration which the League wishes to see preserved in any territory in which it takes specific mandatory interest.

The questions with which the League is concerned—and I shall deal with that matter more fully when the actual treaty comes before the House—are such questions as the continued enforcement of the organic law, prescribing the constitutional system of government, guaranteeing freedom of conscience, freedom of worship and equality of treatment for all races; the rights of communities to their own schools; reasonable safeguards for the interests of foreigners and a number of things of that sort which are of great importance from the point of view of the League. Nearly all these are things which we can secure quite easily through the presence of British officials and for which neither great expenditure of money nor the presence of armed forces is required.

I will only say two things more. The Government have been charged and I have been charged in particular in this matter with taking up an uncompromising and uncompromising attitude. I think the House will realise after the explanation I have given that as long as Turkey claimed a great province which we believe belongs of right to Irak there was no common ground on which compromise could start. It was only when the question of right and principle was settled that we got a datum line from which we could start and from which we could enter upon friendly discussion. I do not think anyone can suggest that either the Foreign Secretary or the Prime Minister lost a moment in showing their readiness, from the starting point of the recognition of Irak's right to its own territory, to negotiate with Turkey for any adjustment or arrangement, whether territorial, financial, economic or political, which would make the present settlement any easier for them and which would base it upon mutual agreement and a mutual willingness to operation.

I have endeavoured to summarise—I know at somewhat great length—the whole sequence of policy of every British Government towards Irak. It has been a policy of honouring our obligations, facing our responsibilities, and of endeavouring at the same time by practical measures to build up a state of affairs in that country which would make it possible for us at the earliest possible moment to regard those obligations as discharged and fulfilled. It is a policy which has already in large measure succeeded. Our expenditure in Irak has been enormously reduced, and will be rapidly reduced in the next few years. Economic development is proceeding, and it may be something much greater than anyone has realised.

There is also the great political fact. Surely it is no small thing that we have created in that country a system of government progressive, and yet essentially Oriental, a system of government which is national, and yet tolerant of minorities and which appreciates the help and support we have rendered. I believe it is a wonderful experiment on which we have started in that Near Eastern part of the world, and it may well be that we may yet reap an unlooked-for reward for our efforts. I believe a strong and prosperous Irak, with a healthy, independent national life of its own but closely associated in voluntary and even affectionate union with the British Empire, may yet be an unforeseen source of economic and political strength to this country. But, believe me, a great problem like this cannot be solved by running away from it. It must be faced with patience, and faced with courage. Stumbling steps and wavering mien will never lead us to our goal, nor is it always very prudent to turn back at the roar of every lion in the path, and, after all, some of these lions are very much like the lions which affrighted Christian at the entrance of the Palace Beautiful—chained, chained to the columns of their own newspapers, and incapable of doing the slightest harm to any wayfarer who walks resolutely in the middle of the path. There are other dangers, that may be more real, but with regard to these I do not believe that a lasting peace can ever be won by surrendering to menaces the just rights of those who trust you. I believe, on the contrary, that in this matter, from first to last, the present Government and every preceding Government have given evidence both of their whole-hearted and sincere desire for peace and of their determination to honour their obligations. We shall, I firmly believe, find our way out of our present difficulties, create a permanent and lasting peace in the Near East, and, by doing so, win our reward for carrying through and fulfilling a task which has, I know, been anxious and difficult, but which is, I believe, a great task, worthy of a great Empire.

No. 110.

ASIA, STRAND

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Sir R. Lindsay (Constantinople).*

(No. 152.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, December 22, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 146 of 20th December.

The Prime Minister asked the Turkish Ambassador to call this afternoon, and renewed to him the statement made to his Excellency on the 4th instant by Sir Austen Chamberlain, and recorded in his telegram No. 142 of the 5th instant, to the effect that in the event of the decision of the League being in our favour he would be ready, should the Turkish Government so desire, to enter into conversations to ascertain whether any *accommodements* were possible to render more acceptable to them a solution which disappointed their hopes.

The Prime Minister then proceeded to hand to the Ambassador the declaration made on the 16th December by Sir Austen Chamberlain, on behalf of His Majesty's Government (see telegram No. 441 of 17th December from Geneva repeated direct to you).

The Prime Minister added that he would be grateful to his Excellency if he would communicate this statement to his Government and ascertain whether they would be prepared to enter upon a friendly exchange of views to achieve this end. In the event of a favourable reply from the Turkish Government, he would immediately instruct you to proceed to Angora in order to get into touch with the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

His Excellency replied that he would lose no time in transmitting the Prime Minister's message to his Government, and promised to use his utmost endeavour to obtain a favourable reply, as he considered it the duty of an Ambassador to promote the best relations between his country and the Government to which he was accredited.

## CHAPTER II.—ARABIA.

No. 111.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bullard (Jeddah).*(No. 46.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, July 1, 1925.

IT appears that presence of H.M.S. "Cornflower" at Rabigh during landing of pilgrims sufficed to prevent any interference by Hedjaz blockading craft. Do you recommend that she should revisit Rabigh during period when pilgrims are being re-embarked? If so, what are probable dates?

No. 112.

*Mr. Bullard to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 2.)*(No. 110.)  
(Telegraphic.) R

Jeddah, July 1, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 45 reached me at the same time as Ibn Saud's reply dated 16th June. He says he has issued orders to stop forces sent against Akaba and complains that intrigues of King Hussein and Abdullah prolong war, and asks what he should do about railway, which he had ordered to be cut.

I presume reply should be His Majesty's Government are not concerned with railway south of Maan Vilayet.

He says he is eager for final settlement of question with Irak and Transjordania, but is unable to send representative; he would, however, be delighted to receive representative "for a conference about the two questions, and a final settlement in my presence."

(Sent to Bagdad, Bushire and Jerusalem.)

No. 113.

*Mr. Bullard to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 2.)*(No. 111.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, July 1, 1925.

MY immediately preceding telegram.

As it is becoming more and more probable that Ali will have to go soon and that we shall have Ibn Saud here, I suggest in regard to conference we should say that His Majesty's Government are considering question of sending representatives to him.

There will be opportunity for despatch of letter to him about 4th July.

No. 114.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bullard (Jeddah).*(No. 48.)  
(Telegraphic.) R

Foreign Office, July 4, 1925.

YOUR telegrams Nos. 108 and 109 of 29th June: Situation at Jeddah. You should inform Ali verbally in reply to his appeal that, while His Majesty's Government would be most happy if they could contribute in any way to preventing further bloodshed and suffering, they can only contemplate the possibility of intervention if both sides are ready to welcome their good offices. They are, however, taking steps to ascertain from Ibn Saud whether he would do so. This is the utmost that they can do at the present juncture, and you should warn Ali against entertaining any too sanguine hopes of a favourable result of their enquiry.

You should make no reference to appeal contained in your telegram No. 106 of 27th June unless pressed, in which case you should explain that His Majesty's Government cannot agree to his proposal, but that, in order not to embarrass him, they will avoid any unnecessary publicity in the matter.

(Repeated to Bushire, No. 6; Bagdad, No. 11; and Jerusalem, No. 6.)

No. 115.

*Mr. Bullard to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 6.)*(No. 115.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, July 5, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 48.

Ali has agreed to open Jeddah to returning pilgrims, and I can now communicate with Ibn Saud quickly. I venture to suggest that enquiry whether Ibn Saud would welcome intervention should be made before I make a communication to Ali. Latter is so irresponsible that I fear that he would not only consider war as good as won, but would inform everyone that His Majesty's Government had intervened.

No. 116.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bullard (Jeddah).*(No. 51.)  
(Telegraphic.) R

Foreign Office, July 10, 1925.

YOUR telegrams Nos. 110 and 111 of 1st July: Negotiations with Ibn Saud. You should inform Ibn Saud that His Majesty's Government have learned with gratification of his recall of the force directed against Akaba, and are sure he will realise that he has no longer any cause for complaint that Hussein and Abdullah are prolonging the war by their intrigues, since the first is now established in British territory at Cyprus and the other is in the British mandated territory of Transjordan.

As regards railway south of area notified to him as that for which His Majesty's Government regarded themselves as responsible, you should say that it is no concern of His Majesty's Government, who only desire to see hostilities terminated as soon as possible and would be glad to contribute to this end if it were in any way possible. In this connection you may inform him of Ali's suggestion that His Majesty's Government should use their good offices in ending the conflict. You should add that if this were acceptable to him (Ibn Saud), His Majesty's Government would be prepared to lend their good offices to both sides in the common interest of peace. But until they know whether he would welcome the proposal they will of course not attempt to proceed with it.

You should say that, however this may be, His Majesty's Government are ready at once to depute an officer to discuss with him the outstanding questions between Nejd and territories under British mandate; that they welcome his assurance that he would be delighted to receive a representative for this purpose, in order to arrive at a final settlement in his presence; and that His Majesty's Government would be glad to know what time and place would be convenient to him. He will no doubt realise that it is impracticable for them to send a representative to Mecca itself or to any other place which is regarded as holy by the Moslem world.

(Repeated to Bushire, No. 8; Bagdad, No. 13; and Jerusalem, No. 8.)

No. 117.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bullard (Jeddah).*(No. 52.)  
(Telegraphic.) R

Foreign Office, July 11, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 118 of 8th July: Proposal of King Ali to send a new Hashimite representative to London.

You should reply as courteously as possible that His Majesty's Government are not prepared in present circumstances to receive a Hashimite representative in London either officially or unofficially; but that any communications which King Ali may wish to make to them through you will continue to receive all due attention as in the past.

[E 4126/10/91]

No. 118.

*Consul Bullard to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 15.)*

(No. 58. Secret.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to enclose a report on the situation covering the period the 30th May to the 30th June, 1925.

2. Copies of this despatch and of its enclosure are being sent to India, Egypt, Khartum (through Port Sudan), Jerusalem, Bagdad, Beirut (for Damascus), Aden, Singapore, Bushire, Koweit, Bahrein and Muscat.

I have, &amp;c.

R. W. BULLARD.

Enclosure 1 in No. 118.

*Report for the Period May 30—June 30, 1925.*

(Secret.)

THE Hedjaz-Nejd war cannot last much longer. A more decided character than Ali might have given in before, but Ali lacks the resolution even to run away. Hitherto he has been able to live in the hope that things would take a turn in his favour, but the events of the last month seem to have convinced even him that his cause is lost. These events are:—

- (a.) The cession of Ma'an and Akaba, which not only stops the supply of munitions from Medina, but must also dispose the people and garrison of Medina to treat with Ibn Saud.
- (b.) The departure of Hussein for Cyprus, where he can have no direct hand in affairs, which makes it probable that no more money will come from him.
- (c.) The arrival of several thousand pilgrims at Mecca by various routes, in spite of the closing of the Jeddah route and the "blockade."
- (d.) The final refusal of a considerable body of Palestinian troops to work any longer without pay.
- (e.) The superiority shown by the Wahabis in warfare in the open during the last few days, which has not only shaken what little *moral* the unpaid army had left, but has roused Ali from his dream, in which the reconquest of Mecca seemed hardly more difficult—if only he had a little more money or a few more rifles and cartridges—than holding Jeddah against an enemy who had long ceased to attack.

2. A letter was received from Ibn Saud, about the middle of May, saying that he was despatching a force against Akaba, as he was convinced that the main cause of the prolongation of the war was the residence of the ex-King Hussein at Akaba and his work there in furnishing the Hedjaz Government with men, arms, supplies and money. On receipt of this information His Majesty's Government decided that the long outstanding project to absorb Ma'an and Akaba in Transjordania should now be carried out and that Hussein should be invited to leave Akaba. This agency was instructed to convey news of this decision to Ibn Saud, together with a reminder that Akaba lies within territory already indicated to Ibn Saud as that for which His Majesty's Government are responsible. Communication with Ibn Saud, except for letters on uncontroversial matters which can be sent through the Hedjaz Government, is very difficult, but there is evidence that the letter from this agency reached Ibn Saud, as the Umm-al-Kura of the 20th June contains the report of an interview in which Ibn Saud is represented as saying, while refusing to give the source of his information, that Hussein was leaving Akaba and that Transjordania [sic] would no longer send assistance to the Hedjaz, whether in men or money or arms; and that he had therefore issued orders to the force he had sent against Akaba to halt.

3. The news of the decision of His Majesty's Government caused some excitement and depression in the small circle here that takes an active part in the war. The Syrian leaders of the army desired to resist the British occupation of Ma'an and Akaba to the death, or, alternatively, to make a demonstration outside the British Agency in Jeddah. They were, however, calmed by the King, who submitted to the inevitable, after an unacceptable suggestion that the disputed territory should remain

under the Hedjaz until the end of the war, when it should revert to Transjordania. Financially, Ma'an and Akaba are a burden to the Hedjaz, but they are important as a link in the only way of communication with Medina when the tribes in the holy quadrilateral are "up," or when, as at present, the ordinary routes are unsafe from some other cause. It is probable that without Ma'an and Akaba the Hedjaz would have been beaten long ago. It is by that route that they have received several guns and large supplies of ammunition from Medina and that Hussein has sent money to the Medina garrison; and it was at Ma'an that the Palestinians and Transjordanians were recruited who saved the situation when Ali was on the point of giving up the struggle last November. Ali is of the opinion that, once cut off from Jeddah, Medina must soon fall to the Wahabis, and he is probably right.

4. One curious result of the Ma'an-Akaba controversy is a belief, widespread in Jeddah, and apparently shared by the Hedjaz authorities, that England may now be expected to bring about peace, since she has got all she wanted. Ali is making through the Amir Abdullah suggestions for British intervention, and he has asked me why His Majesty's Government, while they are dealing with the northern boundary, cannot also take up the question of the eastern boundary of the Hedjaz; all that is wanted is a resumption of the Koweit Conference.

5. King Hussein eventually accepted the invitation to go to Cyprus, and H.M.S. "Delhi" left Akaba with a cargo which, if report is to be believed, resembled those of all Masefield's ships—quinquereme, trader and galleon—rolled into one. The three weeks' grace granted him was a time of some anxiety here, as it was believed until the last moment that he would return to Jeddah. Ali professes to be glad that his father is out of the way, but as the money is also now out of the way his joy is not unmixed. He would like his father's money without his father, of course, but he would certainly rather have both than be deprived of Hussein's financial help.

6. In regard to the pilgrims who sailed from India for Rabigh, the Hedjaz Government adopted a policy which brought them the maximum of odium and the minimum of advantage. On the 30th May it became known that the two smallest Hedjaz steamers had left for Rabigh with troops, machine guns and a gun or two on board. The Foreign Secretary, when reminded by me that His Majesty's Government did not recognise the Hedjaz blockade, said that they merely proposed to sink any Hedjaz dhows they found and to engage from the sea any Wahabis who might appear. On the 1st June, however, the foreign representatives in Jeddah received from the Foreign Secretary a circular worded as follows:—

"I have the honour to inform you that the Hedjaz military authorities, on account of certain objections raised previously, have informed me of the establishment of an effective blockade of Rabigh, ordered the steamer 'Tawil' to perform that duty and to remain there and some armed dhows with her, and given twelve days' notice with effect from the date of this letter, after the expiry of which everything coming to Rabigh will be dealt with in accordance with the law of blockade.

"Moreover, please note that Rabigh is a theatre of war, that it is to-day being bombarded from the sea and that land operations against it are being begun."

From this it seemed that if British pilgrims were to be landed safely it would be necessary to refuse to recognise the new blockade, since only the first ship could reach Rabigh before the expiry of the notice, and to procure from Aden or elsewhere dhows which would be protected by our flag from interference by Hedjaz vessels. In the event all turned out well, because when it came to the pinch the Hedjaz Government boggled at applying the blockade to British ships, and because the formation of Rabigh harbour—unique, it seems, on the whole Hedjaz coast—prevented the Hedjaz Government from carrying out their intention to destroy or capture any Hedjaz dhow putting off from the shore to disembark pilgrims.

7. The first pilgrim ship, the "Jehangir," reached Port Sudan on the 5th June. The agency doctor and Indian clerk were waiting there, having been unable to get a dhow which would get them to Rabigh in appreciable time before the "Jehangir" might be expected to arrive. A long tussle then ensued between the determination of the pilgrims not to be balked of their pilgrimage and the natural desire of the captain and owners not to have their ship seized and condemned for trying to run the blockade. On the 17th June, although authentic news of the exact situation at Rabigh had still not been received, the captain left Port Sudan for Rabigh. At about this time H.M.S. "Cornflower," acting on instructions issued by His Majesty's

Government at the request of the Government of India, called at Rabigh to examine the conditions there. The commanding officer called on the captain of the "Tawil" to find out what his instructions were, and found that whatever they were they did not include the duty of stopping British pilgrim ships from entering the harbour. He also found that once inside the harbour pilgrim ships could not be followed by the "Tawil," since the entrance is so narrow that it could easily be guarded against the "Tawil" by Wahabis armed only with rifles—for which reason, doubtless, and also because there was one Wahabi gun somewhere on shore, the "Tawil" was keeping well away from the entrance. Finally, he found that there were four sambuks in harbour (a fifth crept in at dawn before he left), that pilgrim ships could approach much nearer to the shore than at Jeddah, and that the Wahabis had made all preparations for landing pilgrims and for taking them to Mecca. By the visit of H.M.S. "Cornflower" the fear was dissipated that the "Tawil" could do at Rabigh what she could do at Jeddah, and, I believe, at any other point on the Hedjaz coast, viz., lie between the much larger pilgrim ships and the shore and capture or scare off by machine-gun fire any Hedjaz dhows putting off from the shore to land pilgrims. It was therefore possible for Commander Wickham, after discussion at Jeddah, to send reassuring messages to the "Jehangir" and the "Gorjistan," the two first pilgrim ships. Moreover, the "Cornflower" went back to Rabigh and stood by until the last of the three ships, the "Akbar," had landed its pilgrims. This was completed on the 23rd June.

8. The "land operations" threatened by the Hedjaz Government in their letter of the 1st June, though not entirely bluff, did not threaten Rabigh seriously. The Hedjaz forces at Yambo—mainly tribal—did, however, succeed in capturing Badr, halfway between Yambo and Rabigh and astride one of the routes to Medina, and the King was hoping as late as the 25th June that they would take Rabigh before the stores landed from the pilgrim ships had been removed to Mecca.

9. It is difficult to understand the Hedjaz Government's policy in regard to Rabigh. I am inclined to think that they were too vague as to what a blockade really means to be able to act with consistency and firmness. The Foreign Secretary was always trying to get from me a definition of what His Majesty's Government would consider an "effective" blockade, so that he might act on it! On about the 17th June, the Government were seriously discussing whether, now that the "Jehanger" pilgrims had been kept roasting at Port Sudan for ten days, they should not allow them to go to Mecca via Jeddah, but the Syrian military party, who eventually carried the day, were against it and voted for the full rigours of the blockade at Rabigh. Moreover, on the 18th, the Foreign Secretary could still write to this agency saying that the landing of goods at Rabigh would be prevented by all possible means and that every [? Hedjaz] boat or dhow appearing in harbour would be captured or sunk. Yet, when the pilgrim steamers went to Rabigh nothing was done to them. However, the Hedjaz Government now console themselves by saying that His Majesty's Government forced the blockade by sending a warship against which they were of course powerless. The King was particularly reproachful about the large quantity of stores which he said had been landed from the pilgrim ships.

10. At the beginning of June there was a considerable number of British pilgrims who had drifted to Jeddah by various routes, e.g., Nigerians who arrived last year just too late for the Hajj, a few Malays who had come months before via Rangoon and India, &c. Some of these managed to get away in dhows, which, under an arrangement winked at by the authorities immediately concerned, landed them a few miles further down the coast, but there were still left those who could not find dhows or could not pay the cost, and the number was swelled during the month by the arrival from Akaba and Yambo on Hedjaz Government steamers, of Indian and other pilgrims who had travelled by way of Palestine. At the request of this agency the King agreed, almost at the last moment, to let them pass through the lines, and they left on the 26th June, still in time for the pilgrimage. The King gave as a reason for letting them go, that they were genuine pilgrims and not political emissaries sent by the Indian Caliphate Committee, like the people on the "Jehangir." If that had been his reason he might have let them go earlier in the month. The real reason was, I think, that he feels he is beaten and wants to get what little credit he can before it is too late. For the same reason he is considering seriously whether he should not allow all returning pilgrims to embark at Jeddah.

11. On the 21st June a letter, a translation of which is attached (Enclosure 2), was received by the foreign representatives from Ibn Saud, saying that he was changing the position of his troops, but by no means abandoning the siege of Jeddah.

That night the neighbouring villages which had been occupied by the Wahabis for about five months, were seen to be on fire, and the next morning the Hedjaz army, finding them abandoned, occupied them as the first step in the march to Granada via Riyadh and Damascus. The spirits of the troops were a little damped to find that the Wahabi trenches were so large and so well covered with timber and sandbags that the Hedjaz bombardments which make so much noise in Jeddah can have done them no harm whatsoever, and the discovery that there were still Wahabis among the foothills completed the feeling of disappointment. A party of cavalry which approached the point where the Mecca road enters the hills was attacked and fled with about ten casualties, and on the 24th a body of Yemenis in the Hedjaz army were nearly surrounded and lost not less than fifty killed and missing.

It is supposed that Ibn Saud wants to be able to send as many of his men as possible on the Hajj, and that he is, therefore, withdrawing to some place on the Mecca road which can be held by a very small number of men. There is reason to believe that when the pilgrimage is over he will concentrate on the capture of Medina and Yambo.

12. On instructions from His Majesty's Government a message was given to Ali that, "while a Government does not ordinarily protect any of its nationals who enlist in a foreign army, His Majesty's Government consider that every soldier in the Hedjaz army who is a native of Palestine or Transjordania is entitled to the full terms on which he enlisted and is entitled to leave the Hedjaz if he wishes to do so unless there is a written agreement binding him for a fixed term." Ali said that according to his information, the men were bound by some sort of written agreement; it was in Ma'an and would be sent for; but he did not venture to promise that their arrears of pay would be given them. The question dragged on until the arrival of the fourth barren pay day, when the men finally refused to serve any longer. On the 28th June thirty came to the agency with their rifles, the next day forty, and the King was so scared that he gave me his word that as soon as a steamer was available, in eight or ten days, he would send them to Akaba and thence to Ma'an. He still, however, postponed a decision on the general question, until a demonstration at the barracks, in which many shots were fired (albeit only into the air), and the rapid increase in the number of men applying to this agency for help, compelled him to tell the Palestinians that within about three weeks they should all be sent away.

13. The Director-General of Customs, who recently returned from a holiday in Eritrea, brought with him from Musawwa' a party of about fifty Somalis, who, rumour stated, were recruits for the army. A few days later most of the Somalis applied to this agency for assistance, saying that they were British subjects who had been induced to come to Jeddah under promise of being given well-paid work on ships, in workshops, and so on, but were now asked to serve in the army—and at £2 a month or less. Few of the men had papers, but there was little doubt that they were from British Somaliland. The recruitment of men from mandated territories has given trouble enough, but for that there are extenuating circumstances; but the enticement of British subjects from Musawwa' to Jeddah for military service could not be permitted, and this agency requested that the men should be provided with the means to leave the country. Somalis are notoriously feather-brained, and it is possible that some, if not all, of the party did agree, before leaving Eritrea, to serve in the Hedjaz army, and changed their minds only when they found that, though the fighting was real the pay was imaginary; but the fact that they applied for help very soon after landing is in their favour. Anyhow, the Hedjaz Government did not attempt to defend the action of the Director-General of Customs, and they provided a dhow to take those of the Somalis who wished to leave—forty-three in number—to Musawwa', or, if the Italian authorities should not allow them to land there, to Aden.

14. I reported some time ago that, according to the Foreign Secretary, the Imam of the Yemen was disposed to help the Hedjaz. The Foreign Secretary has now shown the Egyptian consul a document which he says is a treaty with the Imam. The Egyptian consul is of opinion that the document is genuine. A translation is attached (Enclosure 3). The treaty—if it is a treaty—is very badly drafted (e.g., article 10), and most of it is remote from this present world. The only article of much practical interest is that which provides for military assistance, and even this—since neither party would ever have any arms or money to spare—boils down to the right of the Hedjaz to recruit Yemenis if they can pay for them. As, however, the Hedjaz owes four months' pay to the troops it has already, there is little chance of its being able to bring this clause into effect.

The treaty is said to have been signed at Jeddah by representatives of the Imam, but no news of this has been heard except through the Foreign Secretary, who seems to have spoken about it to no one but the Egyptian consul. I may add that the Egyptian consul, who is not very intelligent, is allowing himself to be used, consciously or unconsciously, for Hedjaz Government propaganda.

15. Ali's financial position becomes worse and worse. Not only have the troops and the officials been four months without pay, but there is no longer even a vague hope of receiving any considerable sum from outside. Lutfullah's promises are seen to have been empty, and the King will consider himself fortunate if Hussein sends enough money to enable him, by giving the troops a small present at the pilgrimage feast, the 1st July, to stave off serious trouble in the army.

Two or three months ago I was informed by a usually reliable person that Ali had received £10,000 or so from his brother Feisul. I was not inclined to believe this, as Feisul has a fixed civil list and all Hashimites seem to be extravagant, but the report fits in with a statement in a recent number of the Irak intelligence reports, that the proceeds of a loan of a lakh and a half of rupees, secured on the funds of the Nabbawiyah Wakfs in Irak, had been hurried off to Jeddah by the Council of Ministers. It is stated that the funds of these wakfs are intended mainly for the poor of Medina, but the money has doubtless been used for general purposes. As, however, in ordinary times most of it would be stolen by the Shereefs of Mecca this perhaps does not matter much.

16. It was recorded in the last report that the Russian and Persian representatives had contradicted the statement made in the "Umm-al-Kura," that, on their way to Mecca, they spoke to Ibn Saud—privately—about peace. They wrote to Ibn Saud an identical letter referring to the "fabricated" report and asking him to correct it in the next issue of the "Umm-al-Kura," as otherwise they would be compelled to issue an official contradiction. The letters would be considered unfortunately worded even if the addressee had been a person of no importance and the writers had been speaking the truth; as it is, the wording is most insolent. But they got no good by their denials. The "Umm-al-Kura" printed the letters and Ibn Saud's reply, with caustic editorial comments. Ibn Saud's letter is very strong. "I could not have believed that the representatives of Governments would say a thing and then deny it. There was, as it happens, no harm in what you said and you did not ask that it should be kept secret. You said that your motive was love for Islam and the East. I will not take back one word. The proof of the accuracy of the report is in Sheikh Fuad's reference in his letter to messages from certain gentlemen. If you give it the lie you give yourselves the lie." Sheikh Fuad has told me several times that it was Khakimov and Lari who acted as go-betweens for him, and Lari does not maintain his denial in private. Khakimov, however, is said to be facing it out.

The same number of the "Umm-al-Kura" prints an interview with the Senussi, in which he is reported as saying that M. Khakimov and the acting Persian consul secured separate personal interviews with him and made use of them to raise the question of peace, only to receive the obvious reply that the Senussi has nothing to do with politics. In addition, Khakimov is also stated to have asked the Senussi why he came to Mecca by land instead of via Jeddah, and Ahmad Lari to have wanted to know whether the Senussi's journey was spontaneous or instigated by the Turks!

This is worth reporting rather fully, because it shows what very clumsy diplomatists Khakimov and his Persian pupil are and what Ibn Saud thinks of them. If Jeddah falls into Ibn Saud's hands, it will be difficult for Khakimov to remain here.

17. Two members of the Soviet agency staff, the second secretary and the translator, were recently granted leave to Russia, and they applied to the Egyptian consul for a diplomatic visa "in transit." The Egyptian consul replied that he could give them an ordinary transit visa, but that, if they wanted a diplomatic visa, he must consult his Government. As they were carrying three months' despatches (dealing, no doubt, with such interesting matters as Khakimov's unsuccessful attempt to enlist Ibn Saud in the Soviet campaign against England), an ordinary visa was no good to them, so they went to Musawwa, whence they would get a direct steamer for Italy.

The Egyptian consul has since been instructed by his Government not to grant any member of the Soviet agency a visa for Egypt, not even a transit visa.

R. W. BULLARD.

P.S.—Ali has just sent me a telegram, to be despatched to London, asking for the intervention of His Majesty's Government. He knows quite well the principle laid down by His Majesty's Government, that only on application from both parties could they intervene, and he also knows the imperative reasons for the adoption of that principle, but, like his father, he has no sense of reality whatsoever.

R. W. B.

Enclosure 2 in No. 118.

*Translation of a Letter from Ibn Saud to the Foreign Representatives in Jeddah, dated 28th Dhu'l Ka'dah, 1343 (June 20, 1925).*

(After compliments.)

ALTHOUGH I am aware that your Governments have declared their complete neutrality in regard to the war in progress between Nejd and the Hedjaz, I think it necessary to give you an explanation about our military position and our plans for the future; in the first place, because these explanations relate to the political situation of the country in which you are interested—especially at this time when visitors who are nationals of some of your Governments are coming by various routes to perform the pilgrimage; and, secondly, in order to crush lies and rumours which might be spread by evilly-disposed persons whose desire it is to besmirch our reputation and to decry the public security reigning throughout the land, whereby pilgrims might be influenced and our brave army degraded.

I have to inform you that I have decided, with the help of God, to adopt a stronger and quicker plan both for the siege of Jeddah and for the capture of other places. For military reasons it has been decided to change the present position of the army and to dispose it according to a new arrangement and plans drawn up for the purpose; the troops will be transferred to more suitable and more effective positions.

It is not to be understood from this that the transfer involves the raising of the siege of Jeddah; on the contrary, it will remain, we trust, under even stricter siege than before.

As to the question of pilgrims and public security in Mecca and on the roads leading to it from the ports of Rabigh, Lith and Kunfudah, I have to inform you, in order to forestall any attempt to make trouble which (may be made and of which news) may reach your office, that the most minute precautions are being taken for the safety of pilgrims, and that all preparations have been completed to ensure their comfort and tranquillity both for their journey (to Mecca) and for their return.

(Seal of Ibn Saud.)

Enclosure 3 in No. 118.

*Translation of an alleged Treaty between the Hedjaz and the Yemen, signed at Jeddah about June 1925.*

#### ARTICLE 1.

THE contracting parties admit that the Arab countries from one extremity to the other are an indivisible Moslem whole, according to the known rules in the Moslem Shar' Law. This necessitates their renewing their admission of Shar' rights to the noble rulers who bear rule in them and enjoy their hereditary independence within the boundaries which are already fixed or about the delimitation of which an agreement may be arrived at in future. Any dispute about them shall be settled by friendly means adopted in common. They undertake also to support each other in the attainment of the aim of strengthening the bond of brotherhood and the relations of friendship.

#### ARTICLE 2.

There shall be lasting peace and friendship between the contracting parties.

The contracting parties agree to use all the means in their power which the laws in force permit, to prevent their respective countries from being made a base for any movement directed against the present or future interests of the other. They agree that neither will enter into any treaty or agreement or understanding

with any State whatsoever, having for its object to harm the other or to trample on any right of the other, whether administrative or political or personal.

#### ARTICLE 3.

In case of a dispute between one of these contracting countries and the other—or a number of them—resulting in a breach of friendly relations, the two said Governments, before resorting to force, shall act with patience until the other contracting Governments have time to prevent the calamity by fraternal mediation, and the two said Governments shall accept the decision of the majority in the matter. If both or either of them persist in wrongdoing, the majority shall act according to His mighty word :

“ If two parties of the believers fight, make peace between them; and if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, make war on the wrongdoer until he obeys the command of Allah.”

#### ARTICLE 4.

Since the Hedjaz is a meeting-place for Moslems who visit it for the performance of a religious duty, the contracting parties agree to exchange official representatives and to allow them to deal with the affairs of their religious nationals (*i.e.*, presumably, those subjects of theirs who have been induced to come by a religious motive) and their general interests.

#### ARTICLE 5.

Without prejudice to the general and particular rights which each of the signatories of this official treaty has in the government of the territories under his control, the contracting parties agree to consult each other, *e.g.*, by exchanging information and advice in regard to treaties and conferences and concessions with the object of increasing mutual confidence and strengthening the political scheme in the Arab countries, and in execution of the word of God “ He ordered them to take counsel of each other ” and of his glorious word “ and he took counsel of them about the matter.”

None of them shall aim at any foreign treaty or agreement in regard to anything which is under the Government of the other party, and if either of them does such a thing it shall be null and void.

#### ARTICLE 6.

Moslem has the right [*sic*] to help (another) Moslem in repulsing harm and enmity, the contracting parties agree to exchange material help for the purpose of defence to the utmost of their power, whether in money or in men or in arms or in war material; only, the applicant (for help) shall undertake to repay the money or to pay the value of the material and arms later if his necessity allows of it, and shall guarantee rations and other necessaries to the troops supplied to him.

#### ARTICLE 7.

The nationals of each of the parties shall have the right to reside and to exchange their place of residence freely in the territory of the other, and there shall be equality between those nationals and the natives of the country in all matters touching taxation and commerce and navigation and the practice of trades and professions.

Each of the parties shall do his utmost to remove economic hindrances and to encourage commerce and to facilitate imports and exports.

If a dispute occurs between those nationals and the natives of one of the said countries, it shall be referred to the courts of that country for hearing in accordance with the inspiration of the Shar' and justice, and the judgment of that court shall be valid.

#### ARTICLE 8.

If any Arab Amir in the Arab countries desires to join this Arab alliance and to come under the articles of this treaty, it shall be accepted of him, and he shall be regarded as a signatory; only, this shall not be completed until after examination and acceptance by the two signatories.

#### ARTICLE 9.

The signatories agree that if either party comes to know either directly or indirectly of any secret or open movement harmful to the other, he shall have the right [*sic*] to reveal it at once and to assist him to repel it to the utmost of his power and strength.

There shall be a league composed of their delegates and called “ The League of the Arab Countries ” to consider matters relating to the good and prosperity of the peninsula and likely to strengthen the bond of mutual acquaintance and brotherhood. This league, however, shall have no right of sovereignty or compulsion.

The league shall meet before or after the pilgrimage, according to the desire of the signatories.

#### ARTICLE 10.

This treaty shall be considered binding and in operation from the date of signature. It shall be in operation for twenty years from the date of its coming into force, and unless one of the contracting parties informs the other, six months before the expiry of the twenty years, of his intention to denounce the treaty or his desire to modify it, it shall remain in force for six months from the day on which one of the signatories shall have sent the said notice [*sic*].

This treaty has been written in Arabic in duplicate. Each of the signatories shall keep one copy.

[E 4127/10/91]

No. 119.

Mr. Bullard to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 15.)  
(No. 59.)

Sir,  
Jeddah, June 30, 1925.

IN continuation of my telegram No. 109 of the 29th June, I have the honour to enclose herewith a translation of a letter from His Majesty King Ali dated the 8th Dhul Hijjah, 1343.

I have, &c.  
R. W. BULLARD.

Enclosure in No. 119.

Translation of a Letter from Ali, King of the Hedjaz, dated Dhul Hijjah 8, 1343 (June 29, 1925), to the British Agent at Jeddah.

(After respects.)

I BEG you to send the following to His Majesty's Government by telegraph. If there is no objection it will be sent at the expense of the Hedjaz Government :—

“ I am confident that His Majesty's Government, who bore the greatest part in (securing) the independence of the Hedjaz and in helping it, will not consent to see it remain in the present critical situation, aggravated, as that situation is, by exceptional circumstances.

“ The course of this war, which has necessitated the raising of the question of Ma'an and Akaba at the most critical moment, and the financial situation, which has led to the demobilisation of certain Palestinian volunteers, oblige me to appeal to their sympathy, trusting to their well-known policy of friendship which cannot, I am confident, be obstructed by any neutrality. Moreover, it has now become known that the present war is not religious, as was alleged, but in reality political and personal.

“ I feel the need of that ancient kindness which I used to find in His Majesty's Government, both towards me personally and towards my country. His Majesty's Government know my sincere loyalty towards them, both in the past and in the present.

“ I accepted this heavy duty only, as is well known, under pressure from my people—that allied people which deserves the compassion of all the Allies and especially of His Majesty's Government. If I had not been certain of the barbarity of the Bedouin fighting against them and of the atrocities to which the chain of

painful events from their entry into Ta'if until to-day bears witness, I should have been in a different position; but my honour and their trust in me forbid me to expose them to anything of that kind.

"Inspired by the sincere desire to put an end to bloodshed and to alleviate the miseries of the two Arab parties in the Hedjaz and Nejd, I entreat His Majesty's Government to ward off the calamities in such manner as they consider most effective and of the most speedy service to them both and to humanity.

"I should be glad to learn their views on this request, which I cannot think will remain fruitless. I await their honoured reply."

Thanking you in advance, I am, &c.

ALL:

[E 4128/10/91]

No. 120.

*Mr. Bullard to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 15.)*

(No. 60.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation of a letter from Ibn Saud, dated the 16th June, 1925. It will be noticed that the letter did not reach me until the 30th June.

2. Copies of this despatch and of its enclosure are being sent to Bushire, Jerusalem and Bagdad.

I have, &c.

R. W. BULLARD.

Enclosure in No. 120.

*Translation of a Letter from Ibn Saud to Mr. Bullard, Jeddah, dated 24th Dhu'l Kadah, 1343 (June 16, 1925).—(Received in Jeddah, June 30, 1925.)*

(After respects.)

I HAVE to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 29th May, 1925, which reached me on 19th Dhu'l Kadah, 1343 (June 11, 1925). I have noted its contents.

Respecting as I do the interests of His Majesty's Government, and being bound to her by the strongest bonds of friendship and sincerity, I have given due consideration to the points contained therein. I immediately issued orders to certain detachments of our troops which had left here for Akaba, and similarly I hastened to send messengers to the headquarters of Hail to stop the forces which had marched or might be about to march against the said place. I trust that my orders will reach the leader of the expedition before he takes any action.

Here I must invite your careful attention to a matter of capital importance, viz., the intrigues of Hussein and of his son Abdullah in Amman, which have prolonged the war and caused us many troubles; I do not think they will come to an end unless His Majesty's Government keep a close watch from afar upon these two persons and prevent them from interference, whether direct or indirect, in the military and political affairs of the Hedjaz. We know the extent to which the military situation has been influenced by help they have given in money and men, and by their use of Akaba as a base for their military operations, and if we have closed our eyes to this and to (the possibility of) an attack on Akaba, it was only because we knew for certain that this hostile action on the part of the Shereefs was not in accordance with British interests, with which we were connected by strong bonds.

Before concluding, I would also draw your attention to the question of Ma'an, which the above-mentioned letter of yours, unlike that of the 23rd October, 1924, does not mention. Nor is there mention of the railway, which we had previously ordered to be cut in several places. I beg you to be so good as to furnish me with further information on these two points.

As to your reference to the readiness of His Majesty's Government to (engage in) negotiations with me regarding the question at issue between me and Irak and the question of the delimitation of frontiers between Nejd and Transjordania, I have to

state that I am most willing to settle these two questions finally, but to send a representative to London or some other place, as is suggested in your letter, for negotiations on the subject, is not possible for me. I should, however, be very pleased to receive a representative if he would come here for a conference about the two questions, and a final settlement of them, in my presence.

(Seal of Ibn Saud.)

No. 121.

*Mr. Bullard to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 20.)*

(No. 119.)

(Telegraphic.) R

Jeddah, July 20, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 51.

Reply from Ibn Saud received 14th July. He says he is sure nothing will happen in the Akaba area, but complained of activity of tribes round Ma'an against his tribes, he does not think latter "will remain with folded hands in face of these acts of aggression." He wants to know exact points on railway which His Majesty's Government regard as boundary. Expresses with regret inability to proceed with peace suggestion. He does not like war, but, as His Majesty's Government know, he suffered much from Hussein, and he must also respect views of people of Nejd and also Hedjaz, who do not want peace with Shereefs; besides, there are other considerations known to [? group omitted], of which [? group omitted] states.

Advancing the heat as an excuse, Ibn Saud suggested about 20th August for arrival of British representative to discuss question between him and mandated territory. He will select place later.

(Sent to Bushire, Bagdad and Jerusalem.)

No. 122.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

(No. 53.)

(Telegraphic.) R

Foreign Office, July 22, 1925.

ON 23rd June an Akhwan raiding party 500 to 700 strong, led by Ibn Ashwan and Ibn Busaiyis and made up of Mutair (Braih) and Shammar (Shujara) and Harb, raided the Dhafir near Naba, 35 miles south-west of Nasiriyah and about 100 miles within Irak territory. Raiders took all herds of camels belonging to over 200 tents, number taken being estimated at about 2,000.

You should protest to Ibn Saud and demand immediate return of all loot, pointing out that, as the Irak Government have for several weeks past been herding refugees northwards so as to make raiding by them impossible, Ibn Saud cannot advance his old excuse of provocation by refugees in this case.

Similar instructions have been sent to Resident at Bushire

[E 4391/176/91]

No. 123.

*Consul Bullard to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 27.)*

(No. 61.)

Sir,

Jeddah, July 8, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith a translation of a letter from Ibn Saud about his relations with Asir.

2. A copy of this despatch and of its enclosure is being sent to Aden.

I have, &c.

R. W. BULLARD.

Enclosure in No. 123.

*Ibn Saud to Consul Bullard.*

(Translation.)  
(After respects.)

24th *Dhu'l Qa'dah*, 1343 (June 16, 1925).

I SHOULD like to inform you about the question of Sayyid-el-Idrisi and his country and its condition. Long ago many complaints began to come to us from certain chiefs of the Idrisi's tribes, and from his generals and leading people. They all complained of the bad government there under which they were groaning, the anarchy in the land and the lack of security for life and property in their country; and they asked us to intervene in their affairs or to extend to them our influence or assistance. We rejected their applications, however, because of the strong friendship and amity between us and Sayyid-el-Idrisi resulting from the treaty with us which existed during his father's time; in the circumstances we were naturally unable to give ear to their demands and requests.

It appears, however, that the situation in the Idrisi's territory has become worse than before. I am inclined to think there must be other powerful factors at work which have obliged Sayyid-el-Idrisi to ask us in a letter, which we have received from him, to intervene in the affairs of his country and to take over the reins of government. There is a very ancient friendship and steady affection between us and the Idrisi family. Moreover, there are many considerations and ancient reasons which compel us to assure our southern frontiers, and imperious motives for the preservation of the balance of power in Asir and Yemen. Consequently we could only answer the call of our friend, Sayyid-el-Idrisi, and comply with his request, and bring the area indicated by him under our sway, and we have issued orders to our commanding officer in Asir to comply with the order of Sayyid-el-Idrisi, to occupy all the area the latter might indicate, and to restore peace and order there.

This is what has happened up till now. If anything fresh occurs, you will be duly informed.

Compliments.

(Seal of Ibn Saud.)

No. 124.

*Acting British Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received July 29.)

(No. 121.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, July 29, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 53 of 22nd July.

Ibn Saud replied that mounted robbers, assisted by Dhaffir, looted camels belonging to Ibn Ashwan, who in return with men of Sabien afterwards looted the camels of Dhaffir.

Camels now at Riyad, at disposal of Government, numbers uncertain: requests His Majesty's Government return camels of Ashwan without promising to return Irak camels, but he implies reciprocity. I suggest further strong note and promise to examine his vague accusation.

(Repeated to Bushire.)

[E 4471/181/91]

No. 125.

*M. de Fleuriau to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received July 30.)

L'AMBASSADEUR de France a été chargé de remercier son Excellence le principal Secrétaire d'Etat pour les Affaires étrangères de sa communication du 18 mai dernier relative aux phares de la mer Rouge, dont le Gouvernement français a apprécié l'esprit amical.

Il lui semble, toutefois, que la thèse du Gouvernement anglais telle qu'elle est exposée dans son mémorandum ne puisse être admise sans réserves, surtout en ce qui concerne la portée juridique de la concession régulièrement reconnue à l'Administration des Phares.

Il est exact que les quatre feux de la mer Rouge ont été construits à la suite de l'arrangement du 27 avril/9 mai 1899 entre l'Administration des Phares et l'Empire ottoman. Mais cet accord—simple arrangement provisoire—ne constitue pas, comme le laisse entendre le Foreign Office, la véritable base juridique du droit du concessionnaire. Cette base est en réalité l'accord fondamental du 2/14 avril 1881.

Il est dit, en effet, dans le préambule de l'arrangement de 1899 que celui-ci vise "la construction des quatre feux ci-après dénommés (Hbou-Aïl, Zebayer, Djebel-Tir, Mokka) compris dans le contrat de concession des feux de la mer Rouge, accordée à la date du 2/14 avril 1881, qui doit être considérée comme la charte fondamentale de l'Administration des Phares pour la mer Rouge et le golfe Persique."

L'arrangement de 1899, au contraire, ne concerne que la construction proprement dite des phares dont le principal a été établi en 1881. C'est un arrangement additionnel dont certaines dispositions d'un caractère provisoire ont été révisées depuis. C'est ainsi qu'un nouvel arrangement, signé le 30 août 1904, modifiait l'article 8 du texte de 1899 en reprenant l'idée d'un tarif, et que cette question du tarif faisait encore l'objet de deux arrangements ultérieurs, respectivement datés des 6 septembre 1906 et 1<sup>er</sup> février 1911, entre l'Administration des Phares et l'Empire ottoman.

Le Gouvernement français fait donc des réserves formelles quant à l'interprétation donnée au contrat de l'Administration des Phares par le paragraphe 3 du mémorandum de son Excellence le principal Secrétaire d'Etat pour les Affaires étrangères. Ce point devra être examiné avec une particulière attention si des entretiens reprennent entre le Gouvernement britannique et la société concessionnaire.

En ce qui concerne la question du statut politique définitif des îles, la solution préconisée par la note de votre Excellence, c'est-à-dire l'attribution à la Grande-Bretagne de la souveraineté de ces îles, occupées en fait par la marine britannique, rencontre une sérieuse difficulté; c'est que la souveraineté de ces territoires ne saurait être acquise par un simple accord particulier entre la Grande-Bretagne et la France, à l'exclusion des autres Puissances cosignataires du Traité de Lausanne.

Cependant, M. Briand serait disposé à se rallier à la suggestion britannique le jour où l'attribution et le statut définitif des îles feraient l'objet d'un règlement entre toutes les Puissances intéressées, étant bien entendu que les droits de l'Administration française des Phares ottomans sur les quatre phares seraient entrés en vigueur.

L'Ambassadeur de France est chargé de faire connaître au principal Secrétaire d'Etat pour les Affaires étrangères l'acquiescement du Gouvernement français à ce point. Dans ces conditions, le Gouvernement français donnerait son adhésion à la proposition britannique et il n'a pas, d'ailleurs, l'intention de soulever des difficultés en ce qui concerne les avantages que l'Angleterre tire déjà de son occupation de fait.

Ainsi pourrait être établie la base légale envisagée par Mr. Chamberlain pour rendre définitif l'arrangement à intervenir entre le Gouvernement britannique et l'Administration des Phares. Le Gouvernement français ne doute pas que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté n'apprécie la valeur de cette adhésion.

En ce qui concerne Mokka, enfin, il serait entendu que le Gouvernement anglais donnerait, sous une forme appropriée, une assurance analogue dans l'intérêt français.

Un tel arrangement étant, par ailleurs, hautement désirable pour la bonne marche des services d'intérêt public assurés dans la mer Rouge par l'Administration des Phares, M. Briand estime qu'il serait opportun de reprendre, sans tarder, les entretiens officieux entre les représentants du Département anglais compétent et ceux de cette administration sur la base de la réunion du 20 octobre 1924.

La question du bateau-feu de Faô pourrait être provisoirement réservée pour un examen ultérieur, lorsque les premiers résultats de principe et, en premier lieu, l'élaboration d'un tarif se trouveront acquis.

M. de Fleuriau a l'honneur de faire part de ces suggestions à son Excellence le principal Secrétaire d'Etat pour les Affaires étrangères et lui serait reconnaissant de lui faire connaître si elles paraissent de nature à préparer les bases d'une entente amicale au sujet de cette affaire.

M. de Fleuriau saisit, &c.

*Ambassade de France, Londres,  
le 28 juillet 1925.*

[E 4547/10/91]

No. 126.

*Mr. Bullard to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 4.)*

(No. 66. Secret.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to enclose a report on the situation covering the period the 1st to 20th July.

2. Copies of this despatch and of its enclosure are being sent to India, Egypt, Khartum (through Port Sudan), Jerusalem, Bagdad, Beirut (for Damascus), Aden, Singapore, Bushire, Koweit, Bahrein and Muscat.

I have, &c.  
R. W. BULLARD.

Enclosure in No. 126.

*Report for the Period July 1-20, 1925.*

(Secret.)

1. A letter from Ibn Saud which reached this Agency via Rabigh stated, for the information of His Majesty's Government, that he had been invited by the Idrisi to take over the government of the latter's country, and that, out of friendship for the Idrisi, and in order to safeguard his southern frontier and to preserve the balance of power in Asir and Yemen, he was acceding to the request, and had given the necessary orders to the officer commanding his forces in Asir.

2. The Hedjaz-Yemen treaty had, as we thought, not got so far as the Egyptian consul was given to understand. It has not been ratified by the Imam.

3. Seventy-seven natives of Palestine and Transjordania, released from service in the Hedjaz army, left for Akaba on the Hedjaz Government steamer "Rushdi" on the 14th July. According to a written statement sent to me by the Foreign Secretary, each of the men had enough food to take him to Ma'an, three majidiyahs (5s.) in money, and an order on the manager of the Hedjaz Railway at Ma'an for the balance of his pay. The balance in each case would be about £18. They will probably never collect that, but they are lucky to get away on any terms. Many others want to go as soon as the Hedjaz Government can provide a ship to send them to Akaba.

4. As a footnote to the preceding report, it is necessary to add that, when the pilgrim steamship "Jehangir" made for the entrance to Rabigh Harbour, the smaller Hedjaz Government steamer, the "Rushdi," which was on guard with the "Tawil," fired three shots across her bows. The captain of the "Jehangir," however, preferred to fall foul of the Hedjaz Government rather than of a shipload of Turkistani, Afghan and Bengali pilgrims. He therefore steamed straight ahead, and the Hedjaz steamers did nothing.

5. Ibn Saud claims that 60,000 Nejdies were present at Arafat for the Hajj. This figure may be an exaggeration, but all the pilgrims who have reached Jeddah say that the Nejdies were very numerous: "The plain was full of them." There were, of course, few pilgrims from overseas; they consisted mainly of about 2,500 who came from or via India through Rabigh, a few hundred from Syria, Turkey, West Africa, &c., who travelled via Musawwa' and Kunfida, and an unknown, but not large, number of Sudanese and Nigerians, who sailed from Musawwa' and other ports to Kunfida.

All reports indicate that the pilgrimage was very healthy and that there was no epidemic of any kind.

6. The pilgrims from India, who travelled to Mecca via Rabigh, took five days on the road, but arrived safe. The charge for camels was low, and no extortion was practised by the camel-drivers.

7. The Hedjaz Government agreed to allow pilgrims returning from the Hajj to come to Jeddah to embark. In order to give the Caliphate Committee no ground for criticism, I informed Ibn Saud that, while the Jeddah route was open for pilgrims bound for India, they could, if they liked, e.g., if they had left baggage at Rabigh, travel back by the way they came, but I asked that other British pilgrims should come to Jeddah. Ibn Saud replied that the Indian pilgrims wanted to go to Rabigh, and the Malays too. A document purporting to be a petition from British Malays, asking for steamers to be sent to Rabigh, was enclosed. Most of the signatures were in the

same hand, and the petition began with the untrue statement that the Hedjaz Government had prevented the signatories from travelling to Mecca via Jeddah. All the Far Eastern pilgrims in Mecca for this Hajj, except perhaps a dozen or so, were people who had been there a year or more, and the absence of fresh pilgrims was due to the fact that, at the time when the Far Eastern pilgrims usually travel, Jeddah was closely besieged, and not to any opposition on the part of the Hedjaz Government. The petition was, of course, concocted by the people who used to forge similar documents in Hussein's time, with the object of supporting Ibn Saud's plan to divert all the pilgrim trade to Rabigh. But this plan is not possible, and both the Netherlands consul and I were obliged to explain to Ibn Saud that for several reasons it was necessary that the Far Eastern pilgrims should come to Jeddah rather than Rabigh. The Blue Funnel and Dutch lines will not send their big steamers to an unknown port; there is no means of telegraphic communication, and no shipping agency at Rabigh whereby arrangements can be made for such ships, which make a call at Jeddah as an incident in their voyage to the East, and do not make special pilgrim voyages, as the Indian ships do, to call at a given hour for a given number of pilgrims; and, finally, many British Malays and all Javanese are registered at their respective consulates in Jeddah and have to call here for their tickets or for some formality or other. Ibn Saud's reply was rather curt, but the Malays and Javanese were duly sent to Jeddah. It is quite clear that none of them had wanted to make the five-day journey to Rabigh or took the least interest in the Indian delegation's efforts to make Rabigh the pilgrim port.

8. Rabigh does very well indeed for a small number of pilgrims, but it would not meet the requirements of a normal season. The commanding officer of H.M.S. "Cornflower" estimates that only four or five ships could lie at anchor in the harbour, and that ships which were much bigger than the ordinary Indian pilgrim steamers would have difficulty in turning, and outside the harbour the water is too deep to anchor. This would not do for a normal season, when pilgrims pour in from seven or eight ports and when as many as twenty steamers lie at anchor in Jeddah Harbour waiting for the pilgrims to return.

9. About 200 British Malays and 1,000 Takrunis have reached Jeddah from Mecca. One or two seem to have been robbed by Wahabis on the way, but most of the parties saw no Arabs at all.

10. Many, if not all, of the Wahabi troops released by the raising of the siege of Jeddah made for Medina, not for Mecca. A body of some 3,000 passed through Rabigh. They retook Badr and went on towards Medina. It appears that all the tribes between here and Medina, except those in the immediate neighbourhood of Yambo, have gone over to Ibn Saud and have been received by him on condition that they help in the siege of Medina.

If persistent stories received from Mecca through pilgrims are to be believed, Ibn Saud is having some trouble with his people about Jeddah. They want to rush the defences, which they could easily do while they are so numerous and the defence is so weak, but require as a reward permission to plunder the town. Ibn Saud, while equally anxious to end the struggle, and aware that the quickest way to do it is to take Jeddah, does not dare to risk another Taif.

11. One of the Germans who left a few months ago has returned with four others who profess to be air pilots. All that these pilots have done is to smash the old Armstrong aeroplane after a few very short flights. This leaves only one machine—a de Havilland—at all capable of flight.

12. King Ali has asked whether His Majesty's Government would receive a certain Egyptian lawyer, Hassan Sabri, as his representative in London, in place of Dr. Naji-al-Asil. His Majesty's Government replied that they were not prepared in the present circumstances to receive a Hedjaz representative in London, either officially or unofficially.

13. An Indian delegation consisting of representatives from the Caliphate Committee and the Committee of Ulama, appear to have travelled to Mecca via Rabigh. According to the "Umm-al-Kura," the Mecca newspaper (No. 28 of the 10th July), they seized the occasion of the Hajj feast (Id-al-Adhha) at Muna to exchange speeches with Ibn Saud. The leader of the delegation, Muhammad Shafi'-al-Dawndi, who began by praising the state of security on the road, said that they and the Moslem world were expecting the Holy Land to be cleansed from all impurity—especially from the stain of foreign suzerainty. They approved of Ibn Saud's plan not to rule over the Hedjaz or to make it part of his dominions, but simply to clear it of Hussein and his sons, and of the project to call a conference of the Moslem world to deal with the question.

In his reply, Ibn Saud declared that his aims in regard to the Hedjaz differed in no wise from theirs. He had come to the Hedjaz not by his own desire, but compelled thereto by Hussein and his sons, who prevented Nejd from performing the pilgrimage and treated Meccans and visitors with oppression. He had another reason for attacking Hussein; it was to defend his own country against the efforts of Hussein and his sons to destroy it and the Saud family. He had the proofs of their guilt in letters and demands of theirs in his possession. With God's help he had entered the Hedjaz, and he would not relax his efforts until he had established security and peace there.

He swore before God and the Moslem world that his aims were limited to three principles:—

- (1.) He wished to preach the name of God and to make people cling to their religion.
- (2.) His belief was that of his pious ancestors and his doctrine their doctrine. His doctrine was founded on the Koran, the correct traditions, the commands of the orthodox caliphs (*i.e.*, the first four), the acts of the Companions (of Muhammad) and the consensus of opinion of the four Imams, Abu Hanifah, Malik, Al Shafi'i and Ahmad (Ibn Hanbal), and of such Moslem divines as followed the Koran and the sunnah.
- (3.) He was completely independent in his territory, and no one had the right to interfere in its affairs in any way whatsoever. It is true that there was a treaty between him and a certain Power, relating to the safeguarding of certain interests essential to his territory. There were precedents for that in the times of the Prophet and the Orthodox caliphs. God forbid that he should admit any foreign interference in his territory; such interference would be contrary both to his religion and to his honour.

He had not acquired the country in which he lived by any help either from within or without. He seized it by the grace of God and the power of his sword when all the people were his enemies. Was it likely that, when all these territories had come under his rule, he would dare to admit anything prejudicial to his religion or his honour? God forbid!

It was through God and his sword that he attained honour and glory; no State helped him, no Government carried him to success with its forces. The title by which his community and his people knew him was sufficient for him, whether he was called General or Amir or King. Outward show did not matter. The army they saw before them at the Hajj was not more than a tenth of the Nejdites capable of bearing arms.

He had recently urged a party of Meccans who came to see him not to put their trust in the title of Shereef, or in office or rank. Bilal the Abyssinian was preferred to the Prophet's uncle, Abu Lahab.

Nowhere in all the countries of the world did he find greater freedom than that which his people enjoyed. Moreover, what freedom was greater than the freedom of Islam, in which the weak obtained his due against the strong without bribery or deceit? The object of his desire was to be a servant of the Shar' Law, a servant to Islam and to Moslems, spending his energies in safeguarding their religion, &c. If he did that he would gain, even if he ate only barley and slept on the bare ground.

14. In the course of a correspondence between His Majesty's Government and Ibn Saud about a proposed meeting of their representatives to discuss questions at issue between Nejd and Transjordania, and between Nejd and Irak, Ibn Saud was informed of King Ali's suggestion that His Majesty's Government should use their good offices with a view to ending the Nejd-Hedjaz conflict. It was made clear to him that, while His Majesty's Government would be prepared to lend their good offices to both sides in the interests of peace, they would, of course, not attempt to proceed with the suggestion until they learned that it would be welcome to Ibn Saud.

The reply has just reached Jeddah (the 19th July). Ibn Saud says that he is no lover of war. His Majesty's Government, however, know what troubles he suffered "during the Amirate of Hussein." The people of the Hedjaz and the people of Nejd are not inclined to peace with the Shereefs, on account of the troubles and oppression which they have endured, and he cannot do otherwise than give due consideration to their views. There are other considerations of which right-thinking British statesmen are aware. He is unable, he much regrets to say, to proceed with the suggestion.

Ali knew nothing about the enquiry made by His Majesty's Government until Ibn Saud's refusal arrived, but he is so feather-headed that the mere appeal to His

Majesty's Government made him feel that the war was won. A few hours before Ibn Saud's answer was received he was saying that he was prepared to make sacrifices to secure peace; he would give up Tarabah and Khurmah on condition that he had Taif, Hunakiyah and Khaibar as outpost towns.

Jeddah is in a desperate state. There are many deaths from starvation, and the water supply is a constant source of anxiety and distress. Many of the Mecca refugees in Jeddah wish to return home, but cannot get permission from the King. Since Ali's appeal, which was, of course, made known to everyone by Ali and his officials, it has been freely admitted that, failing intervention by His Majesty's Government, Ali's cause was hopeless. But the King's indecision may yet cause him to stay until it is too late to make an honourable retreat with his troops and other dependents.

I have, &c.

R. W. BULLARD.

[E 4548/165/91]

No. 127.

*Mr. Bullard to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 4.)*

(No. 67.)

Sir,

*Jeddah, July 20, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith copies of correspondence exchanged with Ibn Saud about the settlement of points at issue between him and Transjordania and Irak, and the suggestion made by King Ali that His Majesty's Government should use their good offices in the interests of peace.

2. Copies of this despatch and of its enclosures are being sent to Jerusalem, Bagdad and Bushire.

I have, &c.

R. W. BULLARD.

Enclosure 1 in No. 127.

*Mr. Bullard to Ibn Saud.*

(Translation.)

(After respects.)

*Jeddah, July 13, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Highness that I duly received your letter No. 155 dated the 24th Dhu'l Ka'dah, and communicated its contents to His Majesty's Government. They have now instructed me to address your Highness in the following sense:—

His Majesty's Government have learned with gratification that your Highness has recalled your forces directed against Akaba, and they are sure your Highness now realises that you have no longer cause to complain that the ex-King Hussein and the Emir Abdullah are prolonging the war by their intrigues, since the former is now established in British territory, in Cyprus, and the Emir Abdullah is in the British mandated territory of Transjordania.

As to that part of the railway south of the territory notified to your Highness as territory for which His Majesty's Government regard themselves as responsible, it is no concern of His Majesty's Government, who only desire to see hostilities terminated as soon as possible, and would gladly contribute to that end if it were in any way possible. His Majesty's Government recently received from King Ali a suggestion that they should use their good offices with a view to ending the conflict. If such a suggestion were acceptable to your Highness, His Majesty's Government would be prepared to lend their good offices to both sides in the interests of peace, but until they know whether your Highness would welcome such a proposal they will of course not attempt to proceed with it.

Whatever your Highness's views on this point may be, His Majesty's Government are ready to depute an officer at once to discuss with your Highness outstanding questions between Nejd and territories under British mandate. They welcome your Highness's assurance that you would be delighted to receive a representative for this

purpose in order to arrive at a final settlement in your Highness's presence, and they will be glad to learn what time and place would be convenient to you. Your Highness will doubtless realise that it is impracticable for them to send a representative to Mecca itself, or to any other place which the Moslem world regards as holy.

(Compliments.)

R. W. BULLARD.

Enclosure 2 in No. 127.

*Ibn Saud to Mr. Bullard.*

(Translation.)

(After respects.)

*Dhu'l Hijjah 27, 1343 (July 18, 1925).*

I HAVE received your letter dated the 13th July, 1925, and noted its contents, and I have the honour to reply as follows:—

1. As to Akaba: Strict orders have been issued to all the army commanders to keep away from the Akaba area, and although I have not yet received a reply from the commanders, I am able to assure you that nothing whatever will happen in that area.

You state in your letter that His Majesty's Government are not concerned with the southern portion of the railway, but His Majesty's Government say nothing about any specific place. I therefore desire to draw their attention to the movements of the tribes around Ma'an against our tribes time and again. These movements have been more active recently, and I do not think our tribes will remain with folded hands in face of these acts of aggression, and I fear lest the area of these activities should spread farther from Ma'an.

2. As to the question of peace mediation: I am no lover of war, nor am I inclined to prolong it. His Majesty's Government are well aware of the troubles I suffered during Hussein's Emirate. The people of the Hedjaz and the people of Nejd are not inclined to conclude peace with the shereefs, because of the troubles and oppression which they have endured, and I cannot do otherwise than give due consideration to their views. Besides this there are considerations of which right-thinking British statesmen are aware. I greatly regret that I am unable to proceed with this suggestion.

3. I am delighted at His Majesty's Government's acceptance and at their efforts to put an end to the abnormal situation between our Government and the Governments under mandate. I am prepared to receive a representative of His Majesty's Government for the discussion of pending questions, but in view of the great heat, I think it better that the representative should come at the end of Muharram (about the 20th August) to such place other than Mecca and the holy places as I may think proper for the purpose.

(Compliments.)

(Seal of Ibn Saud.)

No. 128.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 4.)*

(No. 122.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

MY telegram No. 121.

Ibn Saud now informs me in further communication that camels raided by Ibn Ashwan are lying at Riyad at the disposal of British Government.

He states that Emir of Hail informs him Dhaffir raided Lina and carried off six herds of camels. Request that they may be returned to owners.

(Sent to Bushire.)

*Jeddah, August 3, 1925.*

No. 129.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 4.)*

(No. 123.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Jeddah, August 3, 1925.*

REFERENCE Alexandria telegram to Foreign Office of 2nd August: Egyptian intervention in Arabia.

I have reason to believe that King Ali has promised King Fuad post of Caliph if he will intervene and bring about favourable settlement of present Arabian dispute.

Egyptian consul to-day hinted that his Government should send troops to Hedjaz and should take it over from Ali, considering, apparently, that Fuad's lien on Caliphate would be furthered if in charge of holy places.

(Sent to Alexandria.)

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Henderson (Cairo).*

(No. 191.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, August 7, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 279 of 2nd August: Egyptian mediation in Hedjaz dispute.

You may inform Egyptian Acting Prime Minister that His Majesty's Government have no objection to any attempt at mediation in the Hedjaz conflict on the part of King Fuad or his Government.

This is on the definite assumption, however, that there can be no question of the despatch of troops from Egypt to the Hedjaz, as suggested in Jeddah telegram No. 123 of 3rd August.

Please repeat to Jeddah.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

(No. 54.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Foreign Office, August 10, 1925.*

MR. BULLARD'S telegram No. 115 of 5th July: Mediation in Hedjaz dispute.

You should now inform Emir Ali, with reference to message conveyed in Mr. Bullard's telegram No. 109 of 29th June, that on the receipt of his appeal His Majesty's Government asked the Sultan of Nejd whether he would accept the good offices of a representative to be appointed by His Majesty's Government in an endeavour to reach a settlement of the differences between the Hedjaz and Nejd; that Ibn Saud has now replied that he is unable to accept such mediation, and that consequently His Majesty's Government are regrettably compelled to refrain from any further attempt at intervention unless or until both parties shall spontaneously invite them to assist in the re-establishment of peace.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

(No. 55.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Foreign Office, August 10, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 119 of 20th July: Negotiations with Ibn Saud.

You should inform Ibn Saud in reply that His Majesty's Government have received no information in regard to the reported activities of tribes round Ma'an, but that they are communicating with Palestine authorities with view to obtaining report on the activities of which His Highness complains.

With regard to Ibn Saud's enquiry where Transjordan boundary crosses Hedjaz Railway, you should invite his attention to previous message addressed to

him by His Majesty's Government. In particular, see my despatch No. 3 of 8th January, which states that boundary crosses railway in neighbourhood of Mudawara.

You should also remind Ibn Saud that His Majesty's Government are urgently awaiting his suggestion regarding place at which proposed conference would be held, on learning which they will at once proceed to appoint delegate.

No. 133.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 14.)*

(No. 124.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, August 13, 1925.*

SULTAN of Nejd requests permission for envoys from Hedjaz and Nejd to go to India, Egypt and East Indies in order to raise charitable funds and to expound Wahabi belief and contradict lies and false rumours concerning them; also to assure Mussulmans that a road to Mecca is open and that safety is guaranteed. Requests early reply.

Also sends to British, French, Italian, Netherlands, Soviet and Persian consuls joint communication requesting respective Governments to inform their Moslem subjects that owing to poverty in Hedjaz charities are required, Governments may send delegates to supervise distribution, and that the way to Mecca is open and is safe.

No. 134.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 19.)*

(No. 126.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, August 19, 1925.*

FOREIGN Office telegram No. 55.

Ibn Saud replies that he hopes that His Majesty's Government's delegate will be sent soon, and he is prepared to meet him near their encampment outside Jeddah. He requires five days' notice only to make arrangements for meeting and conducting delegate to rendezvous.

Thanks British Government for interest shown regarding his statement of tribal activity round Maan.

King Ali had no objection to delegate passing through lines of defence.

No. 135.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 20.)*

(No. 127.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, August 20, 1925.*

AT the urgent request of King Ali I have temporarily refrained from granting refuge to and repatriating slaves from Jeddah.

Ali asserts that he is in favour of abolition of slavery and is prepared to enforce it gradually when peace is declared, but considers situation at present critical and is anxious not to give possible excuse for insurrection to local population, where feeling is high on slavery question.

I have repatriated twenty slaves since 21st July, and seven are awaiting shipment.

May I have confirmation of my action, or should I continue as formerly?

No. 136.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Government of India (Foreign Department).—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received August 25.)*

(No. 129.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, August 25, 1925.*

YOUR unnumbered telegram [? of the 24th].

Tomb of Syed Na Hamza reported destroyed by forces of Ibn Saud and Kubba of prophets [sic] struck by bullets.  
(Sent to Foreign Office.)

No. 137.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 25.)*

(No. 130.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Jeddah, August 25, 1925.*

HEDJAZ Government have issued pamphlet addressed to Indian delegation which is intended to be distributed in India, in which they claim that a secret treaty exists between His Majesty's Government and Ibn Saud, and that terms are shameful and Ibn Saud's actions are governed by Great Britain. Also that delegation's reception in Mecca was due to intervention of His Majesty's Government; pamphlet draws attention to destruction of tombs and massacre at Taif.

It would appear to be a clumsy effort to obtain support of Indian delegation, which would seem to favour Ibn Saud, by playing on their anti-British feelings.

They consider that anything in connection with British interest would be [? news to] the delegates.

I venture to suggest that His Majesty's Government should protest against general tone of pamphlet.  
(Sent to India.)

[E 5228/10/91]

No. 138.

*Acting Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 1.)*

(No. 73. Secret.)  
Sir,

*Jeddah, August 10, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to enclose a report on the situation covering the period the 21st July to the 10th August.

2. Copies of this despatch and of its enclosures are being sent to India, Egypt, Khartum (through Port Sudan), Jerusalem, Bagdad, Beirut (for Damascus), Aden, Singapore, Bushire, Koweit, Bahrein and Muscat.

I have, &c.  
S. R. JORDAN.

Enclosure 1 in No. 138.

*Report for the Period July 21–August 10, 1925.*

(Secret.)

DURING the period under report the internal situation appears to become more impossible every day. Amir Ali and his followers are resorting to all possible means to obtain money, and now that to all intents and purposes it appears impossible to procure any outside the Hedjaz he has commenced extorting money from the merchants in Jeddah. This on account of the dire poverty already existing would appear to be the final effort of Ali to keep his throne, and hold the Wahabis at bay.

About the end of July the kaimakam of the town was instructed to call a meeting of the principal merchants of Jeddah, and when assembled were informed that the Government required £20,000, and they, the merchants were to produce it. After much argument and a blank refusal on the part of the kaimakam and other merchants (the kaimakam is the principal merchant in the town) the amount was reduced from

£20,000 to £10,000, and the King offered as security certain property of his at present in Wahabi hands. This also was refused and a deadlock reached. At the Selamlik on the following Friday the King refused to receive any of the merchants and ignored them completely. Subsequent arrangements have produced about £4,000, which has already been paid to the soldiers to keep them in the trenches.

The Government are now forcing merchants, under threat of the confiscation of their property, to subscribe to this war fund such amounts as the King considers reasonable, amounts varying from £20 to £200. In this way the tottering throne may be steadied for a while, but in a town where starvation is rife and business at a complete standstill it would appear to be only hastening the end. A number of deaths occur daily from starvation, also from beriberi and scurvy produced by under-nourishment.

The general state of despondency of the King and Government was considerably relieved about the 1st August when a letter from Mr. Philby, written from London and addressed to the Director of Customs, arrived here. He asked on what conditions the Hedjaz Government would be prepared to grant concessions for oil and railways, &c., as he had met certain financiers in England who were prepared to put money into the Hedjaz and had advised them to go on. The King and Foreign Secretary at first saw in this the end of all their troubles and worries, and were prepared to grant anything. Potential oil-fields at Dubba, railways, mines and ports sprang to their minds, and the money, not less than half a million as mentioned to me, was already as good as in their hands. But they failed to realise that all these sources of wealth, if they exist, were for the present in Ibn Saud's hands and likely to remain there. The Foreign Secretary called one evening to know if Ibn Saud would be obliged to recognise any concessions granted by them for territory actually in his hands at present owing to the war. I told him that it was highly improbable, and that English capitalists would hardly be prepared to put capital into a State where security could not be reasonably guaranteed. The general state of despondency again prevails.

On the 25th July grace to £7,000 received from ex-King Hussein and a further £5,000 from Egypt, evidently a part of the revenues of the Shereefal property in Egypt, two months' wages were paid to the soldiers in the outer fortifications, but the reserves (irregulars) in Jeddah received only a few medjidehs each. The King promised to pay the soldiers the balance, three months' wages, in twenty days.

It is reported that King Ali received from his brother, King Feisul, a telegram on the 27th July or thereabouts telling him that he is endeavouring to send him £14,000, and under no circumstances to leave Jeddah. I have been unable to confirm this information, but have no reason to doubt its veracity in view of the lakh and a half of rupees sent by Feisul from charitable funds during May last.

It was also rumoured that a certain Tawil mentioned in my predecessor's reports, who had left Jeddah some months ago, had arranged an advance of £8,000 from an Italian bank in Massaua. But this appears highly improbable as the Government have no security to offer.

On the 28th July the King is supposed to have received a telegram from Abdullah stating that Ibn Saud was weak, and that peace negotiations would soon commence, and to await his letter which would explain all.

A further telegram from Feisul also advised Ali to hold on, as it would be detrimental to their family name if he were defeated by Ibn Saud. Should he not be able to hold out, then make peace direct or indirectly on best conditions possible, but in any case not to leave the Hedjaz.

I cannot guarantee the authenticity of these telegrams, but the information came from an employee of the King and should be fairly accurate though perhaps subject to exaggeration.

2. At the request of the King the Egyptian consul sent a telegram to King Fuad of Egypt asking for his good offices in the settlement of the Hedjaz-Nejd dispute. To date no answer has been received, but as Ibn Saud has already intimated that no outside intervention will be tolerated, it is difficult to see what good King Fuad can do. It appears that King Ali has promised to support King Fuad's nomination for the Caliphate in return for his services.

Since writing the above, the Egyptian consul has called and informed me that King Ali was pressing him to send a letter to King Fuad from Ali asking for his intervention. I asked the Egyptian consul if this was the first time he had been approached by the Government of the Hedjaz, and he was most emphatic that it was. Consequently, I am at a loss to understand why the Acting Prime Minister

in Egypt should inform Mr. Henderson that he had received a request from King Ali transmitted by the Egyptian consul. The Egyptian consul has promised to provide me confidentially with a copy of the letter. About half an hour after this interview Sheikh Fuad, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, called at this agency and produced what purports to be a copy of the letter to the King of Egypt. I am attaching a translation, but will first see if the two notes so voluntarily offered agree in substance.

They would appear to be either working in collusion and trying to blind this agency, or King Ali is or has been in direct touch with King Fuad to the exclusion of the Egyptian consul. Probably more light will be thrown on this matter in the near future and will figure in my next report.

3. A certain amount of dissension arose in the local Government recently and culminated in Sheikh Fuad, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, submitting his resignation to the King's secretary, one Fadil Saggaf, who, as a matter of fact, was the chief cause of the trouble. Saggaf, wishing to keep the matter from the King and wishing also that Fuad had not gone quite so far, visited Sheikh Fuad in his house and after sundry apologies and regrets requested him to withdraw his resignation.

Sheikh Fuad, who had had no intention of resigning really, was satisfied with this moral victory and withdrew his resignation and reassumed his duties after an absence of twenty-four hours (Friday).

The dispute arose over the King, through Fuad, giving permission for about 100 British subjects or protected persons to proceed to Mecca. Knowing that certain French, Italian and Netherlands subjects wished to go to Mecca, where living is much cheaper than in Jeddah, I approached my colleagues with the idea of a joint note to Ibn Suad requesting the necessary permission for our respective nationals to enter Mecca, thereby I considered making Ibn Suad's responsibility greater and assuring greater protection. This was readily granted, and a copy of the joint note and Ibn Suad's reply is attached hereto. Fadil Saggaf objected to these people proceeding, stating that it would be misconstrued by the Wahabis who would think that the foreign Powers were anxious to get their nationals out of Jeddah and send them to Mecca, and Saggaf brought the council to his point of view, at which stage Fuad stated that the King had already given his assent and could not go back on it and possibly alienate the sympathies of the foreign Powers involved, and then withdrew. As stated above the matter was later settled and the combined party is to leave on the 10th August (to-day).

A copy of the joint note setting out certain regulations which these persons were to observe, and the reply sent by myself and my colleagues, is attached.

4. The military situation is most precarious. Rumours to-day state that 300 of the 600 to 700 regular troops engaged in Jeddah are demanding their release and return to their country. They are mostly Yemenis, and the steamship "Tawil," which has been lying in Jeddah for some days, left for Port Sudan to obtain a supply of coal and water, and will, so the Government informed the soldiers, be used for their repatriation as soon as she returns.

Besides the above there are now some 2,000 Bedouin irregulars within the defences of Jeddah, but they are badly armed and equipped, some having the exceedingly long large-bore rifle of no mean antiquity.

The steamship "Radwa" brought from Akaba certain guns and ammunition which arrived from Medina by train. There were 2 guns and 1 howitzer, 3 machine guns, of which one is unserviceable, and about 1,800 cases of gun ammunition and some 160 cases of small arms ammunition. She brought also some 170 fighting ranks, and supposedly some 18 prisoners of war. There was much rejoicing at this, and the local population were jubilant at the discomfort of these latter. It later transpired that they were criminals from Medina that they thought unsafe to leave there.

The Wahabis, about 1,000 strong, have again appeared before Jeddah on the 5th instant, but so far have refrained from hostile action. They appear to be a watch post, whilst the main force, composed of approximately 10,000 troops are besieging Medina. Telegrams (wireless) from Medina state that the enemy are numerous and the town besieged, but that only small attacks have taken place between the outposts and reconnoitring patrols for the present.

Ibn Saud's declarations in the Mecca paper, "Umm-al-Kura," throw light on these operations, together with the attitude he seems about to adopt as regards the Hedjaz. A translation of these articles is attached. It would appear that, owing to

the fact that he cannot restrain his men in the attack, and much loss of life and damage to property and religious relics and monuments would occur if the town was stormed, he has decided to adopt siege methods so as not to earn a bad name for his followers. Whether he will be able to restrain their natural ardour remains to be seen, but, certainly, the taking of Medina before Jeddah would appear to have certain advantages, as there are no Europeans, properly speaking, in Medina, and Jeddah can hardly hold out alone against the forces Ibn Saud commands, and will, I consider, surrender as a natural sequence.

The water supply from the condenser is simply deplorable, and owing to the continuous service it breaks down with unfailing regularity every two or three days. It is now guarded by soldiers, and the greater part of the output is utilised for army purposes; consequently, the townspeople suffer great hardship, and the current price for one keresone tin of water is 10 piastres. The greater part of the population naturally cannot afford this each day, and exist on practically nothing. Great hardship is caused by this lack of water.

5. The situation in Mecca is from all reports very satisfactory, and, except that the townsfolk are obliged to attend prayers five time a day, no other liberties [*sic*] seem to have been curtailed or modified. Naturally, at first there were several incidents, one of which took place in the Indian book-merchants' quarter. But, except for bruises, nobody was much the worse for it. On the following day, however, a collision occurred between Ibn Saud's partisans and some Mecca people, and the result was one killed and many wounded. Order was quickly restored, and Ibn Saud removed the more fanatical of his troops to some distance outside the town.

Ibn Saud, it is rumoured, visited Rabigh and returned to Mecca the following day. I hope to confirm this later from the pilgrimage officer and others who were in Rabigh attending to the pilgrims during this period.

It appears also that Ibn Saud has been sending agents to Eritrea through Kunfuda to obtain, if possible, war material to prosecute his campaign more vigorously. Whether he has been successful or not I do not know, but an Italian ship is reported to have put in at Lith and discharged a large cargo.

A certain Abd-al-Hilal, an agent of Ibn Saud, is supposed to be in Aden, where he has bought a small ship. He was in Eritrea before proceeding to Aden.

On the 23rd July a telegram, complaining of certain raids committed in Irak territory by the Akhwan tribes on the Dhaffir, was received from the Foreign Office, and a note was sent to Ibn Saud protesting and demanding the return of the camels carried off. His rather non-committal reply setting out several counter-claims was received on the 28th July. Later, without any further action on the part of this agency, he sent a further note much more conciliatory in tone, and stated that the camels were at Riyadh at the disposal of the British Government.

Information has also been received that Ibn Saud recently called a meeting of the notables of Mecca and informed them that it had originally been his intention of handing Mecca and Medina, and, in fact, the whole of the Hedjaz, over to the representatives of the Moslem world to administer, but he has come to the conclusion that this would not solve the problem, and has decided to hold it himself as the best solution, assuring all Moslems of free access and liberty within the boundaries of the territory under his control.

6. The pilgrimage has been very successful apparently, and most of the pilgrims have returned to India. The steamship "Alavi" leaves Rabigh not later than the 10th August, and is putting in to Jeddah to receive some forty destitute Indians and others with return tickets. The steamship "Jahangir" is returning to Rabigh about the end of August to pick up stragglers, and I propose, should it be necessary, to get her to put into Jeddah also to take stragglers from here.

The pilgrimage has been healthy, and it was found unnecessary for the ships to put into Kamaran for quarantine.

7. Referring to my predecessor's report of the 30th June, I have been supplied with a copy of the agreement which the Hedjaz Government hopes to conclude with the Imam Yahya of Yemen. The preamble, omitted in the previous report, reads as follows:—

"The aim of the undersigned of this agreement being progress of Arab affairs, both morally and politically, securing their economical interests, keeping away those who try to interfere in the affairs of Arab dominions, and, in virtue of the Islamic obligations and with respect to the needs of their widespread country in securing prosperity, peace and tranquillity, they have made up their minds, for their own persons and on behalf of their heirs and successors, to

conclude this joint agreement for attaining the above good aim. The high parties are His Highness the Imam Yahya Hamid-ud-Din, the Imam of Yemen and His Hashimite Majesty King Ali-bin-Hussein of Hedjaz, who have decided to sign the following."

The rest, ten articles in all, is identical.

A copy of this treaty was forwarded some weeks ago to the Imam of Yemen for approval and signature, but, as no reply has been received by King Ali to date, it might be reasonably assumed that it has not met with the Imam's gracious favour.

S. R. JORDAN.

Enclosure 2 in No. 138.

*His Majesty King Ali to His Majesty King Fuad of Egypt.*

(Translation.)

I HAVE to thank God for your Majesty's recovery from the indisposition which weighed heavily on the souls of all the friends. I entreat the Almighty to grant you the best of health and to save you from any bad incidents, and that the new Al Hijra year would be auspicious to all the Islamic world, especially the Holy Land, which gets the biggest share of your Majesty's care and finds a great patron in your person, following the policy of your respectable family, which is still in the best remembrance and praise of the Holy Land, especially we the shereefs of O'an branch.

Since then we were connected with strong bonds which, by the grace of God, will never be untied and whose favourable result is still spoken of by every lip and tongue.

The Holy Land and its people expect in your Majesty's person every sympathy and assistance, being the greatest Moslem King nowadays ruling one of the nearest Moslem country to the Haramein, and the most zealous for the tradition and the religion not to be handled by evil doers.

I personally and my country people expect every welfare for the Haramein from your Majesty's hands, such as the charities allowed by your great ancestors and others of religious enthusiasm for the poor and needy in the neighbourhood of "Bait-ullahi-el-Haram," and such as the delivery of arms stopped which is meant for the defence of souls and the protection of "Al Ka'aba" of the whole Moslem world.

If your Majesty would be good enough as to render any advice or opinion which may lead to the cessation of the present hostilities and the spread of peace, it would be the greatest favour of your Majesty towards the Moslem world in general and God in particular.

Enclosure 3 in No. 138.

*British, French, Italian, Netherlands and Persian Representatives in Jeddah to Ibn Saud.*

(Translation.)

(After respects.)

July 28, 1925.

WE the undersigned representatives of foreign Powers in Jeddah request that you will permit a number of our subjects, details of which are given below, to proceed to Mecca from Jeddah for the purposes of joining their families or for trade.

It is further requested that you afford them a safe conduct through the territory under your control and place at their disposal sufficient hired transport, for which the usual payment will be made by them.

If suitable to you it is suggested that they be authorised to leave Jeddah on the 20th day of Muharrem, 1344.

British subjects, approximately	...	...	110
French subjects, approximately	...	...	50
Netherlands subjects, approximately	...	...	6
Italian subjects, approximately	...	...	10
Persian subjects, approximately	...	...	2
<b>Total</b>	...	...	178

(Compliments.)

## Enclosure 4 in No. 138.

*Ibn Saud to the British, French, Italian, Netherlands and Persian Representatives in Jeddah.*

(Translation.)

(After respects.)

I BEG to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 28th July, 1925, relative to the departure of certain nationals of yours for Mecca. I have to welcome everybody who comes to this country, especially your respectable subjects, for whom we shall do our best to secure their comfort.

As regards providing camels for their transport, I have issued orders to that effect; and according to the estimate of the authorities concerned, 360 camels are put for the 178 people at the rate of two camels for each person and 100 pairs of shugdufs at the rate of one shugduf for every two people approximately.

If you see that the above number is less or more than required, you are kindly requested to let us know. Camels will be stationed at the usual place near Nuzla-al-Yamania; also this caravan will leave Mecca on the 19th instant (Arabic month).

(Compliments.)

August 1, 1925.

## Enclosure 5 in No. 138.

*Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hedjaz Government, to the Acting British Agent and Consul, Jeddah.*

(Translation.)

(After respects.)

August 5, 1925.

AS the date of departure of certain nationals of yours, by the sanction of His Majesty the King, is drawing near, I have the honour to invite your attention to the following:—

1. Your nationals are to be instructed not to give any information or news to the other fighting party about conditions at Jeddah or other Hedjaz localities connected with Jeddah by the sea, whether these informations or news are about military, financial or general affairs or the like which is prohibited by the laws of war as known to you.
2. Your nationals are to be instructed not to carry any letter, message or document, whether clear or not, to the other fighting party or to anybody else connected with them either personally or through a medium, in view of the harm which might be brought on the Hedjaz Government.
3. It should be made clear to those nationals that they must not interpret their departure to Mecca in any sense other than its actual meaning. Such obligations are imposed upon them by the sense of honour and by their political situation towards the present war; and are meant to prevent the spread of mischievous rumours which certain people tried to propagate at Jeddah as connected with this trip. The spread of such rumour, though not true, made a good number of local subjects who made the same application to become anxious. It is regretted that such rumours are of the same nature as may be spread in such critical moments.
4. A list showing the names and numbers of the persons travelling should be sent to be kept in the files.

Although I am confident that you will agree to the above, appreciating the request to be decent, yet I am quite sure, in the meantime, that you are aware of the idea of that letter which is no more than the necessity of military precautions and responsibility of duty, inasmuch as the friendly relations are luckily very good between the Hedjaz Government and your Government, whom you represent quite impartially to any of the fighting parties.

(Compliments.)

## Enclosure 6 in No. 138.

*British, French, Italian, Netherlands and Persian Representatives to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hedjaz Government.*

(Traduction.)

EN réponse à votre lettre en date du 15 Moharrem courant, j'ai l'honneur d'informer votre Excellence que mes ressortissants ont conscience de la neutralité de mon Gouvernement dans le conflit actuel entre le Hedjaz et le Nedjid.

A leur départ de Djeddah pour La Mecque, ils seront munis des documents nécessaires à leur voyage.

La caravane de mes ressortissants partira donc de la porte de La Mecque de bonne heure le 20 Moharrem, et je vous serais reconnaissant de vouloir bien prescrire toutes mesures nécessaires pour leur libre passage.

Veuillez agréer, &c.

## Enclosure 7 in No. 138.

*Extracts, &c., from the Mecca Newspaper "Umm-al-Kura."*

(1.)—Issue of July 16, 1925.

(Translation.)

THE leading article on the first page is a comment on the proclamation of the Egyptian Government for the Hajj. It deals, in a friendly manner, with certain points of the proclamation and ends in telling the Egyptian Government that it would have been better if they had sent a committee to examine the case and ascertain the situation before issuing that proclamation.

On the second page appears a long article dealing with the future disposition of troops after the Hajj. The paper says that His Highness the Sultan gathered a meeting of his generals and heads of troops and asked them to follow his advice, which was that those who were of old here will return home and be replaced by the newcomers. They first refused and declared that they wanted to remain, but His Highness insisted on the first decision.

They at last complied.

This being accomplished, the forces were divided as follows:—

1. An army of ten "Alwiyah" under Feisul-ed-Duash will be sent to the north.
2. An army to besiege Jeddah.
3. An army to encamp at Bahra and Mecca as reserve.

The rest of the troops not required were sent back to Nejd.

The intervention of the Russian and Persian consuls for peace is also referred to in this number, and "Umm-al-Kura" says that the news was published in the Egyptian papers before it appeared in "Umm-al-Kura" itself. This shows that the facts which were denied by those consuls reached the papers by some reliable means.

(2.)—Issue of July 23, 1925.

## GENERAL PROCLAMATION.

*From Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdul Rahman-al-Feisul-al-Saud to all our Brethren of the Moslem World.*

PRAISE be to the name of God than whom there is no God but Him, and salaams and blessings be on the Prophet, &c.!

I have discussed with the Indian delegation sent by the Caliphate Committee and the ulamas the questions that the Moslems are interested in and want to know our views as regards them.

Sincerity and straightforwardness were observed by us during the discussion, and, thanks to God, we came to a conclusion as regards all the questions dealt with.

To beat down the lies of the enemies of truth and supporters of corruption who profit by disunion of the Moslems and try to put out the light of God by their false endeavour so as to affect the sentiments of the simple Moslems who are not aware of

our conditions, I made a proclamation of the following, so that those who died would have died on evidence and those who live will have to live on evidence:—

1. I have to thank the nations that adopted towards us the position of the supporters of right and I have to thank particularly the Indians for their attitude towards the Arabs and their cause at the time when the Arabs themselves were busy with their quarrels and forgot their duties towards religion and country. I have to thank the Indians because they were the first to answer the call—may God give them the best reward for us and for Islam.

2. I still maintain my declarations about what I invited Islam for, namely, to have a universal conference to examine the questions of Hedjaz that interest the Moslems in general, such as mending roads, securing peace and comfort for every visitor and providing means of communication as far as possible. Thus we and they will share the responsibility of governing the Hedjaz. The invitations to this conference will be renewed after means of communication are attained.

3. Independence of the Hedjaz should be secured in the same manner as we preserve our lives and that we should not allow non-Moslems to have any influence there, thus we observe the duties both of our religion and our honour.

4. Sharia Law is the universal law to be put in force in the Holy Land and that the pious ancestors and the four Imams should be an example for our righteous path. "Ulamas" from all countries will be consulted in all questions that require deep investigation.

5. I assure you that Medina will remain a sacred place which should not be violated. No murder or plunder should take place there. To preserve its honour I contented myself with its siege, though this would require a long time and losses in money. I can, by the grace of God, capture it in one hour, but I care for the safety of the place and the people.

I have given strict orders to the troops not to enter it (Medina) until the enemy surrenders.

As for buildings and charitable institutions, they are going to be dealt with as stated in the previous article.

Our enemies say that if we take Medina we will pull down the Prophet's tomb—  
No. Any Moslem would not think of that.

I am ready to die with my sons and to lose all my money for it.

I do not find any difference between Mecca and Medina. The Prophet ordered that Medina should be sacred just the same as Ibrahim ordered Mecca to be sacred.

No. 139.

*Mr. Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 4.)*

(No. 132.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

FOLLOWING from Ibn Saud:—

" You are aware of lies spread by our enemies by means of wireless and of necessity of wireless station for commercial and pilgrim purposes.

" Please ascertain by telegraph from British firm price, including freight, of two wireless installations, one for Mecca and other for Rabigh. I prefer to deal with British firm and hope for reply by telegraph within ten days.

Please repeat to Department of Overseas Trade.

No. 140.

*Mr. Wellesley (for Secretary of State) to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

(No. 57.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram No. 126 of 19th August: British delegation to Ibn Saud.

You should now inform Ibn Saud that His Majesty's Government have appointed Sir Gilbert Clayton as their representative in forthcoming negotiations. You should make it clear that he no longer has any connection with the Palestine Government.

His Majesty's Government deprecate proposal that meeting should take place in neighbourhood of Wahabi lines outside Jeddah. Communication with His Majesty's Government during negotiations would be difficult, and it would not be dignified for British representative to conduct negotiations in the atmosphere of hostilities prevailing in the neighbourhood of Jeddah. You should therefore propose that meeting should take place at Rabigh or some other suitable place on the coast. Clayton could sail from Marseilles 11th September. Please ascertain urgently what date would be convenient for Ibn Saud to meet him.

[E 5358/5358/91]

No. 141.

*Vice-Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 7.)*

(No. 75.)

Sir, *Jeddah, August 18, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to report that a German, by the name of Baron Bassewitz, arrived in Jeddah by the Khedivial steamship "Mansourah" on the 10th instant, together with two fellow Germans who were taking up employment with the Hedjaz army.

M. Bassewitz, who speaks Persian and Turkish fluently, called at this agency on the evening of the 12th instant and stated that he was proceeding to Abyssinia via Aden and Zeyla, in British Somaliland, and requested a transit visa for these two places. I asked him why he preferred a camel trek through British Somaliland from Zeyla instead of taking the train from Jibuti, in French territory, and I later ascertained from the French consul that he had applied for a visa for Jibuti, but that it had been refused.

M. Bassewitz informed me that he was attached to the German Foreign Office, and had been for some time a secretary at Constantinople, but that he was now on twelve months' leave and travelling around the Near East and visiting a friend in Abyssinia. He has recently visited Trebizon, Erzerum and Kars, in Turkey, and also Georgia and, I believe, Northern Persia. He then returned to Germany and started out on his second trip through Egypt and Arabia to Abyssinia.

During the course of our conversation I gathered that he was interested in "all-metal" aeroplanes, and this has been confirmed by a note from the Minister for Foreign Affairs stating that Bassewitz had applied to the King for permission to have an air station in Jeddah for a line of commercial aeroplanes they hoped shortly to inaugurate.

He further stated that stations had been arranged in Egypt, and that he was proceeding to Abyssinia with the object of arranging other stations there.

I have informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the granting of such concessions without first ascertaining what other nations may have to offer may at no distant date prejudice the prosperity of Jeddah considerably, and that it would be advisable to withhold a definite reply until the termination of hostilities between the Hedjaz and Nejd.

I refused to grant Bassewitz the transit visa to Aden and Zeyla. He called again on the 14th instant and requested a transit visa for Port Sudan, as he wished to return to Egypt via Port Sudan and obtain the necessary authority to proceed direct from the British authorities in Egypt. After obtaining the visa he for some reason failed to leave by the Khedivial boat and is still in Jeddah.

Although I have no definite proof, I believe him to be also connected with the shipment of aeroplanes to the Hedjaz, reported in my telegram No. 125 of the 14th August.

A copy of this despatch is being sent to Egypt and Addis Ababa.

I have, &c.

S. R. JORDAN.

No. 142.

*Mr. Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 9.)*

(No. 133.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram No. 57.

Ibn Saud expresses pleasure at appointment of Sir G. Clayton, but regrets that he cannot accept Rabigh as the place of meeting. Owing to "tremendous amount of work he must deal with" he cannot leave the present position, and suggests Bahra or Brimann as alternative. Bahra is midway between Mecca and Jeddah. Brimann is two hours from Jeddah.

Ibn Saud is said to be at Bahra. Both places are accessible by motor.

Sir G. Clayton could live in Jeddah and proceed to rendezvous daily if necessary.

[E 5484/165/91]

No. 143.

*Colonial Office to Sir G. Clayton.—(Communicated to Foreign Office September 11.)*

Sir,

Downing Street, September 10, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th August, notifying your acceptance of the appointment of British representative for the purpose of negotiating with the Sultan of Nejd a settlement of outstanding frontier and other questions, and to communicate to you, for your guidance, the following information regarding the policy of His Majesty's Government in the matters which are likely to be raised in the course of your conversations with Ibn Saud:—

2. As you are aware, an attempt was made at the end of 1923 to settle by agreement the various matters in dispute between Ibn Saud and the rulers of the neighbouring Arab States, and for this purpose a conference of representatives of the States concerned assembled at Koweit in December of that year under the presidency of Lieutenant-Colonel S. G. Knox, C.S.I., C.I.E. Copies of the records of the proceedings of that conference are enclosed herewith for your information, together with a file containing copies of relevant correspondence with Lieutenant-Colonel Knox.\* A certain measure of progress towards agreement was then made, but for various reasons, which are apparent from the records, the conference closed without achieving any definite result. The main objects for which the Koweit Conference was called were—

- (1.) The delimitation of the frontier between Nejd and Transjordan.
- (2.) The prevention of trans-frontier raiding between the tribes of Irak and Nejd and the settlement of claims arising from past raids.
- (3.) The settlement of frontier and other disputes between Nejd and the Hedjaz.

Since that conference terminated many events have occurred which have considerably modified the situation in Arabia. A brief record of these events will be found in the appendix to the report of the Committee of Imperial Defence, of which a copy is enclosed herewith.\*

Chief among these events was the outbreak of hostilities between the Sultan of Nejd and the King of the Hedjaz. Hostilities are still proceeding, and although the final issue cannot be foreseen, the present situation is that the forces of Ibn Saud are in effective occupation of the greater part of the Hedjaz, including the Holy City of Mecca, and are investing the town of Jeddah, upon which and the immediately surrounding country King Ali maintains a precarious hold. The northern districts of the Hedjaz bordering upon Transjordan are not at present in the effective occupation of either of the combatants. As you are aware, His Majesty's Government have publicly announced their strict neutrality in this conflict.

3. Although the situation in Arabia has been very considerably modified during the last two years, the three principal questions with which the Koweit Conference was concerned remain unsettled to-day, and it is with the primary object of disposing of the first two of these questions that the negotiations, in which you are to represent His Majesty's Government, have been initiated. As regards the first question—that of the delimitation of the frontier between Transjordan and Nejd—I am to enclose, for your information, a copy of the instructions communicated to Lieutenant-Colonel Knox prior to the assembly of the Koweit Conference. You will see that at that

\* Not printed.

time His Majesty's Government were prepared to accept as a minimum an eastern frontier for Transjordan which would roughly follow a line drawn from the intersection of meridian 39° with parallel 32° to the intersection of meridian 37° with parallel 31° 30'. From this point the line follows meridian 37° to parallel 31°, thence to the intersection of meridian 38° with parallel 30°, and thence along meridian 38° to parallel 29° 35', or a point due west of the Nefud salient. This frontier is indicated by a red line on the attached map.† Since this frontier was decided upon the military advisers of His Majesty's Government have represented the importance, for strategical reasons, of including in Transjordan the village of Kaf. His Majesty's Government are now satisfied of the desirability of this, and you should use your utmost endeavours to secure the acceptance by Ibn Saud of a frontier substantially identical with that indicated above, but including Kaf within Transjordan territory.

4. From the telegram from Lieutenant-Colonel Knox, a copy of which is appended,\* it appears likely that Ibn Saud will advance a claim to a frontier considerably to the west of the above line and extending to the north of the Jebel Anaizeh. This frontier claim is indicated by a green line on the attached map.† Such a frontier would involve the interposition of Nejd territory between Irak and Transjordan and would place Ibn Saud astride the Imperial air route to the East. This cannot be permitted, and in no circumstances should you assent to any extension of Nejd territory to the north which would have the effect of separating Irak from Transjordan. You will observe from the enclosed copy of the Iraq-Nejd frontier agreement,\* with attached map,† that the western extremity of this frontier is the intersection of meridian 39° N. with parallel 32° E. The eastern frontier of Transjordan should, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, start from this point and be drawn rather in a westerly or southerly direction than in a northerly.

5. In the southern sector of the eastern frontier of Transjordan Ibn Saud's claim appears equally objectionable, since, in His Majesty's Government's opinion, any more westerly *trace* than that proposed could not be adopted without endangering the safety of the Transjordan section of the Hedjaz Railway. You should therefore regard the northern and southern extremities of the frontier line originally proposed by His Majesty's Government as fixed, and it would be advisable to make this clear to Ibn Saud at the outset of your discussions. If, however, you are unable to induce Ibn Saud to agree to the inclusion of Kaf within Transjordan, and if, in your opinion, further insistence on this point would be useless, you may in the last resort concede that village to Nejd, in which case the frontier should approximately follow the line indicated in red on the attached map.† You will observe that Ibn Saud desires the inclusion in Nejd of a tract of territory to the south of Kaf comprising the four streams running eastward into the Wadi Sirhan, viz., the Wadis Bayet, Gharra, Hasa and Hedridj. His Majesty's Government are not aware to what extent this area is essential as a grazing ground to the tribes depending on Transjordan and Syria, or whether it contains a settled population. Enquiries are being made of the High Commissioner for Palestine, and steps will be taken to furnish you with precise information on these points.

From the telegram from Sir P. Cox, dated the 6th December, 1922, of which a copy is enclosed,\* it will be seen that at that time Ibn Saud would have accepted a frontier roughly following the western edge of the Wadi Sirhan and leaving the greater part of this area within Transjordan.

You should point this out to Ibn Saud if he advances a claim to any territory in this region additional to that claimed in 1922, and should endeavour to resist such a claim on the ground that this territory was clearly not regarded as essential to Nejd in 1922, and His Majesty's Government are aware of no valid reason why it should be so regarded now. If, however, Ibn Saud presses his claim to this tract of territory very strongly, and it appears that unless he receives some measure of satisfaction the negotiations will break down, His Majesty's Government would, as at present advised, be prepared to agree to some arrangement whereby this area would be constituted a neutral enclave (on the analogy of the section of neutral territory on the southern frontier between Nejd and Irak), which the tribes of both parties would be free to enter for grazing purposes. His Majesty's Government are content to leave it to your discretion, in the light of the information which you will receive from the High Commissioner for Palestine, to decide whether such an arrangement would be feasible, and, if so, to work out details in agreement with Ibn Saud.

6. The question of the southern frontier of Transjordan is one of some delicacy

\* Not printed.

† Not reproduced.

owing to the unstable conditions obtaining in the northern districts of the Hedjaz, which, as pointed out above, do not at present appear to be within the effective occupation or control of either Ibn Saud or King Ali. Consequently, any attempt to negotiate a frontier with one party would be liable to give offence to the other. In all the circumstances, and in view of the fact that Ibn Saud has already been informed of the southern limits of Transjordan territory, His Majesty's Government consider that it would be advisable in your conversations with him to treat this matter as a *chose jugée*, merely informing him, if he should raise the point, that the southern frontier of Transjordan starts from the intersection of meridian 38° and parallel 29° 35', crosses the Hedjaz Railway south of Mudawwara and joins the Gulf of Akaba at a point south of that town.

7. With regard to the second main question with which you will be concerned—that of the prevention of trans-frontier raiding between Irak and Nejd tribes—I am to invite your attention to the records of the later meetings of the Koweit Conference, and to the accompanying copy of a confidential despatch, dated the 12th March, 1925, from the High Commissioner for Irak.\* From these you will observe that a substantial measure of agreement was reached at Koweit as to the steps necessary to check such raiding, but that the conference failed to reach agreement on the important question of the mutual restoration of loot and the payment of compensation in respect of damages arising out of past raids. As regards the arrangements necessary to prevent future raids, the position has been very considerably eased by the action of the Irak Government in moving the principal offenders—the refugee Shammar—to districts remote from the Irak-Nejd frontier, where they will not be subject to the same temptation to raid across the border, and where their activities can be more easily and effectively controlled. Consequently, there appear to be good grounds for hoping that on this question it will be found possible to reach an agreement with Ibn Saud. Such agreement should, in His Majesty's Government's opinion, in general follow the lines of the scheme under consideration by the Koweit Conference, unless, of course, some alternative and more satisfactory method suggests itself in the course of your discussions. Any agreement that may be reached on this subject might with advantage be extended, *mutatis mutandis*, to apply to Transjordan. His Majesty's Government anticipate that the settlement of outstanding claims for compensation and the restoration of loot will present greater difficulties, but you should use your best endeavours to obtain a settlement substantially in accord with the suggestions advanced in Sir H. Dobbs's despatch of the 30th June, of which a copy is appended to this letter.\* To assist you in this part of your negotiations, the Irak Government have decided to place at your disposal the services of Tawfiq Beg Al Suwaidi, assistant Government counsellor in the Ministry of Justice. He will be in a position to furnish you with full details regarding claims and counter-claims advanced in respect of past raids, as also with the views of the Irak Government regarding a final settlement of such claims. If you are successful in reaching agreement with Ibn Saud with regard to trans-frontier raiding across the Transjordan or Irak frontier respectively or the question of the determination of a Transjordan-Nejd frontier, the decisions reached should be embodied in separate formal agreements to be signed by you and Ibn Saud. Any such agreements, in so far as they concern Irak, will require to be approved by the Irak Parliament and ratified by King Feisal before they become operative. In so far as they concern Transjordan, they will enter into force as from the date of signature, and will not require ratification.

8. Apart from these major questions, there are two other matters which might with advantage be discussed with Ibn Saud when a favourable opportunity offers, viz., the protection of Nejd interests in Syria, and the question of British representation in Nejd. As regards the former question, I have to explain that in September 1922 Ibn Saud requested His Majesty's Government to undertake temporarily the protection of Nejd interests in Syria. His Majesty's Government agreed to accept this charge, and the French authorities, who were informed of Ibn Saud's request, acquiesced in the arrangement. Shortly afterwards, however, Ibn Saud appointed a representative in Damascus, but, when notifying His Majesty's consul at Damascus of this appointment, asked him to supervise the work of the Nejd representative and to give him all advice and assistance of which he might stand in need. Copies of Ibn Saud's letters are enclosed herewith for your information.\* The present Nejd representative at Damascus, Suleiman Ibn Musheikih, unlike his predecessors, and possibly with the object of enhancing his own importance locally, has shown himself on

\* Not printed.

more than one occasion impatient of the control of the British consul, and the French authorities have similarly evinced an increasing reluctance to accept the intervention of the British consul at Damascus in questions affecting Nejd interests. Matters recently came to a head, when, in April of this year, the British consul intervened with the French authorities on behalf of Nejd and was informed that, as Ibn Saud was already officially represented in Syria, the French authorities were unable to recognise any right on the part of His Majesty's consular officers to assume the protection of Nejd interests in that country.

In order that His Majesty's Government may have the necessary information to enable them to decide what attitude to adopt towards this action on the part of the French authorities, you should seek a suitable occasion to ascertain and report to His Majesty's Government what is the precise function of the Nejd representative at Damascus and what are Ibn Saud's real wishes regarding the protection of his interests in Syria.

9. The second question—that of permanent or semi-permanent British representation in Nejd—is one which has been engaging the attention of His Majesty's Government for some time. The present arrangement has not proved altogether satisfactory. Written communications between His Majesty's Government and Ibn Saud pass through the intermediary of the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, but there is at present no representative of His Majesty's Government in personal touch with Ibn Saud, and the absence of such a representative has given rise in the past to various misunderstandings and disputes, very largely attributable to the fact that His Majesty's Government are frequently unaware of Ibn Saud's real wishes or intentions, since he is notably averse from committing himself in writing. His Majesty's Government feel that many of the disputes which have arisen in the past might have been avoided by prompt and frank discussion of the questions at issue had this been possible.

Various solutions of the difficulty have been considered. It has been suggested that the time has now come to station a permanent representative at Ibn Saud's capital. This suggestion is open to objection on the grounds of the extreme discomfort inseparable from prolonged residence at Ryadh and the dangerously isolated position which such an officer would occupy. Again, it has been suggested that a representative of Ibn Saud should be accepted in London or credited to King Feisal or the British High Commissioner at Bagdad; but, as Ibn Saud is known to be unwilling to place reliance upon the judgment or discretion of his subordinates, such an arrangement would be unlikely to achieve the desired result. Another suggestion which has been advanced is that arrangements should be made for periodical visits to be paid by a British officer to Ibn Saud. In the existing circumstances, this last suggestion appears the most likely to commend itself to His Majesty's Government, but as circumstances may alter in the near future (e.g., Ibn Saud may, as a result of his conquests in the Hedjaz, move his capital to some more readily accessible spot), His Majesty's Government would prefer to reserve their decision until conditions in Arabia become more stable. You should, however, encourage Ibn Saud to discuss this question frankly with you, and, without definitely committing His Majesty's Government to any of the above alternatives, you should endeavour to ascertain his wishes in the matter. You should point out to Ibn Saud that His Majesty's Government are desirous of making arrangements which would enable them to be kept permanently in touch with him, if circumstances render such a course practicable, and both in discussing this matter with Ibn Saud and throughout your discussions with him you should make it clear that His Majesty's Government are anxious to be on cordial terms with His Highness and to co-operate with him wherever possible.

10. It is not improbable that during your conversations Ibn Saud will raise the question of his position in the Hedjaz, and will endeavour to obtain from you a statement of His Majesty's Government's policy, and, in particular, to learn what view His Majesty's Government take of the recent expansion of his territories and what are their wishes with regard to the future administration of the Hedjaz. If Ibn Saud questions you on these points, you should confine your reply to a statement that His Majesty's Government's only desire is for the speedy termination of the present hostilities and the re-establishment of peaceful conditions in the Hedjaz, their recent offer of mediation was made with this sole object in view, and they have learned with regret that Ibn Saud is at present unwilling to accept it. Their offer has, however, not been withdrawn, and it is still open to Ibn Saud, should he so desire, to avail himself of their good offices. But while hostilities continue His Majesty's Government have no alternative but to maintain an attitude of strict

neutrality. With regard to the ultimate régime to be set up in the Holy Cities and in the Hedjaz generally, you should point out that, beyond doing everything in their power to ensure that their Moslem subjects have free and safe access to the holy places, His Majesty's Government feel that they cannot properly intervene in a matter which so closely concerns Moslem opinion as a whole. While confining yourself to a statement on the above lines, you should in no way discourage Ibn Saud from discussing the matter freely with you.

11. Ibn Saud may also represent that the terms of the treaty concluded with him in 1916, a copy of which is enclosed, are no longer appropriate, in view of the recent extension of his territories, and may suggest that this treaty should be replaced by one more in accord with his increased influence and importance. In this event, you should inform him that, while hostilities are actually in progress, His Majesty's Government clearly cannot enter into negotiations for a new treaty, and that until peace is restored and stable conditions are established, His Majesty's Government would prefer to leave matters as they are.

12. Should Ibn Saud raise other questions which are not covered by these instructions, you should take note of what he has to say and report to His Majesty's Government, at the same time informing him that you are without instructions on these points, but that you will communicate his views to His Majesty's Government, by whom they will be given every consideration.

13. I am to inform you that, in accordance with your suggestion, the Palestine Government have agreed to place at your disposal the services of Mr. G. Antonius to act as your secretary, and have also agreed to attach a British stenographer to your mission. A further communication will be addressed to you with regard to the date of your departure and the venue of the meeting. In the meantime I am to request that you will hold yourself in readiness to proceed to Jeddah at short notice.

I have, &c.  
R. V. VERNON.

No. 144.

*Mr. Wellesley (for the Secretary of State) to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*  
(No. 61.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, September 12, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 130 of 25th August: Propagandist pamphlet issued by Hedjaz Government.

It is undesirable that His Majesty's Government should in any way become entangled in the contest of propaganda now in progress between Nejd and the Hedjaz. In these circumstances it is preferable to abstain from lodging a protest.

[E 5534/1780/91]

No. 145.

*Vice-Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 14.)*

(No. 81.)

Sir,

Jeddah, August 26, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to confirm my telegram No. 127 of the 20th August and to state that King Ali through his Minister for Foreign Affairs and afterwards personally has pressed me to refrain from giving refuge to and repatriating slaves during the present state of affairs in the Hedjaz.

The King expresses himself as being entirely in favour of the abolition of slavery, but points out that such a step in a country where slavery has been the custom for many centuries should be enforced gradually, and that owing to the privations that the population are at present supporting, His Majesty is anxious to avoid anything further in that respect that might tend to precipitate a crisis.

I informed King Ali that I would refer the question to His Majesty's Government by telegram, and that pending a reply I would accede to his request.

There is no doubt whatever that the majority of the Jeddah populace are in a very bad humour. The high cost of living, practically famine prices existing in comparison with the prices in Mecca, insufficiency of water, and forced contributions in money and in kind for the continuation of what is considered to be a losing war, is making them very discontented, and on top of all this for their runaway slaves,

which represent so much capital, to be protected and repatriated by a foreign Power is considered by the King to be straining their patience to breaking point.

I pointed out to His Majesty that with few exceptions all slaves protected and repatriated to date were British subjects, and that they were consequently entitled to protection at the hands of this agency. His Majesty quite agreed, and promised as soon as the situation improved to do his utmost to abolish slavery in his domain.

The particular case which would appear to have brought about this state of affairs is that of a slave named Bilal, a Sudanese, whose master, a certain Dakhil Allah, who is renowned for his ferocity and overbearing behaviour in Jeddah, endeavoured to prevent the embarkation of Bilal at the quay. This, owing to the prompt action of Mr. Lambie employed at this agency, was prevented, and Dakhil Allah collected certain other slave-owners whose slaves had been repatriated by this agency and forming a deputation waited upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

What was said during the interview I do not know, but whilst the deputation was still in his room Sheikh Fuad sent me a note marked urgent, in which such phrases as "my position and even my life is in danger," "I am besieged on all sides," &c., occur.

The master of Bilal, as a last resort, charged him with the theft of a box of jewellery, and insisted on the man being brought before the court. In face of this accusation I had no alternative but to bring back Bilal from the ship to this agency, and, claiming capitulatory rights on his behalf, I informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs that I was prepared to hear the case as soon as convenient to them. Eleven days having passed and no charge forthcoming, and a careful search of the slave revealing but 20 piastres in his possession, I finally sent him to the Sudan on the 25th August.

It is becoming the custom for slave-owners to charge their runaway slaves with theft, thereby hoping to get a decision of the Shara court in their favour and the slave detained in custody. As decisions of the Shara courts are, for a consideration I suspect, always in favour of the master, I see no alternative but to claim capitulatory rights for Sudanese and Takruni slaves, and I shall be glad to receive confirmation of my action in this respect.

The case of the Abyssinians is more difficult. The most serious aspect of the whole slave question is the apathy with which it is treated by my colleagues, who, with the exception of the Netherlands consul, take little or no interest in the slave question whatever. For the repatriation of Abyssinian slaves the Italian consul allows free passages on the Italian boats calling here and going to Massaua, but will have nothing to do with them. They must be placed on board by a member of the staff of this agency and everything done to dissociate the Italian Government as being implicated in their release.

I have, &c.  
S. R. JORDAN.

[E 5535/2219/91]

No. 146.

*Vice-Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 14.)*

(No. 82. Confidential.)

Sir, Jeddah, August 27, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to report that King Ali has requested me to inform you that he is desirous of floating a loan of about £250,000 in Great Britain. He states that negotiations have already been opened with a group of financiers who do not appear averse to the proposal and/or the security offered.

King Ali is anxious to know if His Majesty's Government would consider favourably the raising of a loan of this amount in the United Kingdom.

He explained at length the security he was prepared to offer, which may be summarised as follows:—

1. Customs and quarantine dues.
2. Oil-fields at Dubba. Exploitation of.
3. Various other concessions, such as lighting, &c.

The customs dues, owing to the war and bad administration, have fallen off considerably, but amount, I am informed locally, to about £25,000 per annum at present, but in a normal year are approximately £250,000 per annum.

The quarantine dues amount to about £90,000 per annum during an average pilgrim year, but these also have fallen off considerably.

Under proper control both customs and quarantine should yield considerably more, as, in Jeddah as in most Eastern countries, misappropriation is rife.

King Ali further states that he is prepared to submit both these administrations to British direction and control.

I pointed out that, unless hostilities ceased between the Hedjaz and Nejd, the prospect of the next pilgrim session seemed no better than the pilgrimage just concluded, and consequently the receipts from both these administrations would be negligible.

The King, however, stated that next season he intended to open the port of Jeddah to all pilgrims, and that Ibn Saud would be obliged to allow the pilgrims to pass, and as a result the customs and quarantine receipts would assume normal proportions. He further informed me that the Netherlands consul had signified his willingness to advise his Government to allow Java pilgrims to come to Jeddah under these circumstances. I personally doubt the wisdom of such an action, as Ibn Saud would also most certainly insist on payment of various dues from all pilgrims coming out of Jeddah in order to drive them to ports under his control, and the result would be double payment and the consequent aggravation of the chronic financial embarrassment of the great majority of pilgrims.

The oil-fields at Dubba, he states, are rich and well protected, and are ready for immediate exploitation. It appears that these fields were favourably reported upon by a certain Mr. Worth, who, after his examination of the place, was anxious to obtain a concession.

On the other hand, I believe that a certain Mr. Garrood, a Britisher, lost considerable money over a concession to exploit these oil-fields some years ago.

The circumstances which have led the King to consider the present as a favourable moment to moot the idea of a foreign loan would appear to be the repulse of the Wahabis around Medina, where, after six days' strenuous fighting, they have been obliged to retire, and also the arrival of six De Havilland aeroplanes and 500 high explosive and gas bombs in Jeddah.

The King has promised to let me have full particulars, together with names of the financial group with which he is in communication during the course of the next few days, and I shall not fail to communicate same to you immediately.

I venture to suggest that, in view of the instability of the security offered, the state of hostilities between the Hedjaz and Nedj, and the storm of Indian Moslem disapproval that any sort of British control, official or private, in the Hedjaz is sure to meet with, that His Majesty's Government would be well advised to give no official sanction or approval to any financial venture in this country at present, though the danger of allowing foreign capitalists to get a footing in this country to our detriment, and perhaps to their own also, is evident.

I have, &c.  
S. R. JORDAN.

[E 5530/10/91]

No. 147.

*Vice-Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 14.)*

(No. 84 Secret.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to enclose a report on the situation covering the period the 11th-29th August.

2. Copies of this despatch and of its enclosure are being sent to India, Egypt, Khartum (through Port Sudan), Jerusalem, Bagdad, Beirut (for Damascus), Aden, Singapore, Bushire, Koweit, Bahrein and Muscat.

I have, &c.  
S. R. JORDAN.

Enclosure in No. 147.

*Report for the Period August 11-29, 1925.*

(Secret.)

THE military situation, though very critical at the beginning of the period under report, has recently shown slight signs of improvement.

This is due to: (1) The repulse of the Wahabis at Medina, where they have been, according to report, attacking incessantly for six days, and having failed to capture the town, have now retired to a distance of about three hours' march and guard the approaches to Medina on all sides; (2) the arrival of six aeroplanes with twelve machine guns, 120 cases of s.a.a., and about 500 high explosive and gas bombs in Jeddah. The people of Jeddah flock out each afternoon to inspect these machines being assembled, and see in them a speedy means of bringing the war to an end.

The forces of Ibn Saud around Medina were seen passing through Rabigh and reckoned at about 10,000. Despite their numbers, the small garrison at Medina, owing to the excellent fortifications erected by the Turks during the Great War and the huge supply of guns and ammunition left there by them, have been able to stave off the incessant attacks of the Wahabis, which lasted without a break for six days.

The Wahabis succeeded in advancing right up to the walls of the town in several places, but could not gain an entry, and eventually retired on three positions some distance outside Medina and commanding the approaches to the town. All the gardens outside the walls have been destroyed and the date palms cut down by the garrison itself as they afforded cover to the attacking forces. I believe the food question is very serious. One thousand camels loaded with provisions, despatched by King Ali from Yambo to Medina, were looted by the various tribes on the way and none of these supplies found their way into Medina. The Harb tribe in the whole district have gone over to Ibn Saud, and a siege of Medina would appear to be a more certain and less costly, though perhaps longer, way of securing the submission of the town. During the hostilities it is rumoured, and is practically certain, that the forces of Ibn Saud destroyed the tomb of Syedna Hamza, the Prophet's uncle and one of the first martyrs of Islam, and also that the Kubba over the Prophet's tomb was struck by bullets, which is very probable, as the Wahabi advance brought them within 50 yards of the Kubba.

I am at the first opportunity transmitting a telegram to Ibn Saud, at the request of the Government of India, from the Moslem members of the Indian Legislative Assembly asking for information and details on these reports.

The aeroplanes, of which there are six, arrived in the German steamship "R. C. Rickmers," by way of the Suez Canal, though it was reported in town that she was coming from the south around the Cape of Good Hope to avoid possible detention in Egypt. The planes were supplied by the Steffen and Heymann group in Berlin, and are supposed to have been paid for by the ex-King Hussein during Steffen's visit to him at Akaba.

The planes are British planes, De Havilland 9, mounted with two machine guns and fitted with a Siddeley-Puma engine. The planes are second-hand, but the engines are new. I am endeavouring to obtain the numbers of both planes and engines in order to facilitate the tracing of their peregrinations since they left the British factory.

The bombs, which will weigh, when charged, about 25 lb., are of two kinds. Ordinary percussion high explosive and gas. The gas is referred to locally as an acid which vaporises on explosion and creates a choking sensation and causes the body to swell before death sets in. I cannot guarantee the truth of this latter statement. The machine guns are of the Lewis type, and I believe that two of the machines are fitted with the synchronising equipment.

On the 12th instant, 475 demobilised Palestinians were sent to Akaba in the local steamship "Tawil." I have heard rumours of trouble or illness on board, and that forty were disembarked at Yambo, but I have not been able to verify this information.

There are constant desertions from the local forces in Jeddah since it has been learned that the Harb tribes have gone over to Ibn Saud, and the defences are manned at present by not more than 1,500 men, mostly Yemenis and Harb Arabs, with perhaps 500 Syrians and Palestinians. There are also, it appears, some fifty Druses, who are anxious to return to their own country to help against the French in the revolt in Syria. Two Germans also have obtained permission to return to Germany and are leaving at once.

The soldiers and officers are still some four months behind in their pay, and

just before the King paid them one month's wages, about the 20th instant, the situation was critical, and it was openly stated that the soldiers would sack the town unless paid. This danger has now passed, but the financial situation is, if anything, more precarious than when I last reported.

The devices adopted by the Government to induce or force the local people to disgorge their wealth are many and varied.

The local nickel coinage, which passes under the name of halalas, periodically falls to absolute worthlessness. Its nominal value is  $\frac{1}{4}$  piastre and is supposed to be supported by the reserves of the Government, which are nil. Consequently, the Government, as soon as the halalas fall and local merchants refuse to accept them, buys them in as cheaply as possible, thereby increasing their value automatically and proceeds to issue them at par to the soldiers as pay. Lately this ruse has failed to catch the merchants any longer, and the bazaar went on strike for two days, refusing to accept halalas. No shops were opened and business was at a standstill. The Government put a number of merchants in prison for twenty-four hours and fined them £5 each. With the proceeds of the fines the Government then started a National Bank of the Hedjaz, with a capital of £100. The merchants may now, as soon as they accept halalas, take them to the bank, where they are exchanged at the rate of 12 mejidiehs to the gold pound. Should the Government have no gold, the merchant receives a credit note and has to wait for the next Government windfall. The fixed rate for halalas outside is at  $12\frac{1}{2}$  mejidiehs to the gold pound, so the Government still make. There is about £2,000 worth of halalas in circulation, nominal value.

The King has recently sold a number of shops (his personal property) in the bazaar to a certain Kabil, a local rich merchant, for £5,500 during last week. £3,000 was paid in gold, £2,000 in Jeddah and £1,000 in Medina, and the rest was paid in kind.

The Grand Vizier and Chief Kadi, Sheikh Abdullah Siraj, applied for permission to proceed to Transjordania for a change of air about the 17th instant. I telegraphed to Jerusalem for the necessary permission. Owing to the shortness of notice the reply had not been received by the 19th, so Siraj left on the "Khedivial" on that day for Egypt, ostensibly for a change of air as his health was failing. He also carried with him a full power of attorney in the name of the Hedjaz representative in Egypt for the sale or mortgage of all the King's property in Egypt. The King's aunt, who is with him in Jeddah, gave her signature for the disposal of her share of the property also. I presume Siraj wished to proceed to Transjordania to endeavour to secure Abdullah's co-operation.

It was stated quite authoritatively that King Ali, about the 10th of the month, sent a telegram to ex-King Hussein stating that unless he received £50,000 he would be obliged to leave Jeddah. The ex-King's reply, though full of religious sentiment, did not materially assist. It was: "God's will be done!"

The municipality have recently been commanded by the King to produce more money, so they are to establish a tax on each shop and also a general tax for the support of the police ("sharta") in the town.

Periodically rumours are circulated at the instigation of the King that loans are being arranged, and that money difficulties will soon be over. This has been going on now for about a year, and yet the people seem to believe it.

The anti-Hashimite section of the community lose no opportunity to draw comparisons between the state of Mecca and Jeddah. Actually, one can live in Mecca for what an average clean person pays for water in Jeddah. This is actual fact. Consequently, the discontent of the people can be readily imagined, not only on account of the prices, but the lack of food-stuffs in Jeddah, vegetables and fruit being un procurable, consequently the deficiency diseases, scurvy and beriberi, are rife. Dysentery, on account of the water supply, is also taking a heavy toll of the population.

The Egyptian Red Crescent Hospital staff and equipment returned to Egypt on the 19th instant.

A Russian doctor, by the name of Silniski, has started practice in Jeddah.

A German, by the name of von Bassewitz, supposed to be a diplomat and one-time secretary at the Germany Embassy in Turkey, arrived in Jeddah with two companions and endeavoured to obtain a concession for a commercial aeroplane station. Although M. Bassewitz was in possession of a passport describing him as a "courier," he returned to Suez, after a stay in Jeddah of ten days, by the Khedivial Mail Line as a deck passenger without food. It may, of course, have been from choice, but a deck passage with sundry refugees and Arabs for company

certainly shows peculiar tastes on the part of that gentleman. He is a good linguist and speaks Arabic, Turkish and Persian well, also French, English and Russian. I refused him a visa for Aden and British Somaliland.

The slave question in Jeddah is at present causing a certain amount of heart-burning amongst the local population, who consider that it is bad enough to be constantly victimised by the Government to support what they consider to be a losing war, without having their runaway slaves protected and repatriated by a foreign Government. During the last month twenty-six slaves have been repatriated by this agency, mostly Sudanese, but several Abyssinians also, and after a deputation of the local residents had waited upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs, I was requested by the King, first through the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and later personally, to refrain from protecting and repatriating slaves during the present critical period, as the King was most anxious not to give the local people an excuse for possible insurrection. The King should have said "any more excuses," as these people, whether from cowardice or temperament, are the most patient and forbearing imaginable.

I acceded to the King's request pending telegraphic reference to His Majesty's Government.

Owing to the unfailing regularity with which each slave who has taken refuge at this agency has been accused of theft by his late master, and the fact that decisions of the Shara Court, on account of the financial situation, can be obtained in one's favour for a consideration, I was obliged to claim capitulatory rights on behalf of the Sudanese and Nigerian slaves, and informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs that I was prepared to take the charges of theft as they arose in the consular court. Since this action, however, the charges have in every case been dropped.

The Hedjaz authorities have recently issued a pamphlet in Arabic addressed to the Indian Moslem Caliphate delegate, and intended for circulation in India, in which they assert that a secret treaty exists between Ibn Saud and Great Britain, and that Ibn Saud's actions are controlled by Great Britain. Also that the treaty is shameful, and that Ibn Saud is afraid to publish it. It asserts also that the good reception of the delegation in Mecca was at the instigation of Great Britain.

This represents a very clumsy attempt to turn the affections of the delegation from Ibn Saud to themselves by playing on the delegation's known pronounced anti-British feelings by endeavouring to prove that Ibn Saud is favoured by His Majesty's Government, and that, consequently, anything savouring of Great Britain's influence would be distasteful to the Indian delegation. A translation of several extracts from this pamphlet is attached.\*

During the period under review 700 Takrunis have been sent across to Suakin in dhows and some 50 or 60 are still awaiting shipment.

There are practically no Indians in Jeddah, consequently it will not be necessary to ask the "Jehangir," which arrives at Rabigh about the 1st September, to call at Jeddah, as was at first anticipated. It is calculated that there will be about 300 pilgrims for the "Jehangir" to take back to India from Rabigh, and an Indian clerk on the staff of this agency has been sent to Rabigh to supervise the embarkation.

Ibn Saud, on the 10th August last, forwarded a letter asking His Majesty's Government to inform the British Moslem subjects that, owing to the successive wars and privations, the charities usually sent to the Holy Places were urgently needed, and that the Government could send a representative to supervise the distribution of same if it was so desired.

He also asked permission to send emissaries to the various Moslem countries to " (1) Exound our religious beliefs and make clear our good intentions towards this country and the safety and comfort of the roads; (2) to contradict the lies and false rumours propagated by our enemies."

He further sent a joint note to the British, French, Italian, Dutch, Persian and Soviet representatives in similar terms, but omitting to ask for permission to send emissaries to their respective countries.

I attach hereto, together with extracts from the Hedjaz propaganda pamphlet mentioned above, a translation of the address of welcome Ibn Saud caused to be read to the pilgrims on their arrival at Rabigh.\*

Also two extracts from the Mecca paper "Umm-el-Kura" dealing with the steps taken by Ibn Saud for the internal administration of Mecca.\*

S. R. JORDAN.

\* Not printed.

No. 148.

*Mr. Henderson (No. 76) to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received September 14.)*  
(No. 325. Confidential.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Alexandria, September 14, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 94.

Sheikh Al Maraghi, president of the Supreme Mahometan Court, left on 11th September for Jeddah and Mecca. Ostensible purpose of visit is to reciprocate Ibn Saud's messages of courtesy to King Fuad, but he has a personal mission from the King to take stock of the situation and by ascertaining Ibn Saud's minimum demands to enable the King to judge utility of intervention in the rôle of peacemaker.

No. 149.

*Mr. Henderson to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 16.)*

(No. 326.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Alexandria, September 16, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Jeddah, No. 96:—

"Addressed to Government of India.

"Your telegrams Nos. 1040 and 1120.

"Ibn Saud replies denying bombardment of Medina, stating that Harram there is as intact as that of Mecca.

"He states he has besieged the town in order to prevent possible damage in attack and that he is grieved at impression made on Indian Moslems by lying propaganda of his enemies, who are endeavouring to gain by falsehood that which they cannot by arms.

"He does not mention tomb of Hamza, which may be considered as destroyed.

"Copies of letters will be sent by post."

No. 150.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

(No. 63.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, September 23, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 136 of 18th September: Mission of Sir G. Clayton.

Sir G. Clayton will leave Port Sudan for Jeddah on 7th October in H.M.S. "Clematis." You should so inform Ibn Saud and ask him to arrange for meeting without delay.

Clayton will be accompanied by Tawfiq Beg Al Suwaidi from Irak, Mr. G. Antonius and a British stenographer, together with servants.

No. 151.

*Mr. Henderson to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 6.)*

(No. 352.)

(Telegraphic.)

Alexandria, October 6, 1925.

MY telegram No. 325.

Sheikh-al-Maraghi has returned from Hedjaz bearing letter to King Fuad from Ibn Saud, in which latter states willingness to accept good offices and advice of King provided King Ali and all members of the family of King Hussein are excluded from the throne. He is prepared to evacuate country and to accept, if desired, any other ruler for the Hedjaz chosen by vote of the people of the Hedjaz themselves and guided by committee consisting of representatives from Egypt, Nejd,

Persia, Afghanistan, and three Indian delegates. Ibn Saud informed Al Maraghi that he was only prevented from taking Medina by storm owing to sanctity of holy tombs and Jeddah owing to sanctity of persons of foreign subjects living there.

King Ali was prepared to accept Egyptian intervention on any terms.

Above was communicated to me by King Fuad, and I am repeating this telegram to Jeddah for confidential information of Sir G. Clayton.

King would be glad to learn views of His Majesty's Government on Ibn Saud's proposals.

[E 6103/6102/91]

No. 152.

*Acting Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 7.)*

(No. 89. Secret.)

Jeddah, September 11, 1925

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report a small incident which occurred between the Italian and Hedjaz Governments, illustrating the high-handed methods employed by the former against the latter.

It appears that a sambuk (sailing vessel), owned by Italian subjects, was, somewhere between Jeddah and Rabigh, set upon by two similar craft and the Italian robbed of £137.

The Italian subjects, probably from Eritrea, during the attack, noticed the name on one of the attacking craft and returned to Jeddah and reported to their consul, who lodged a complaint with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who promised that the matter would be thoroughly investigated and the offenders punished.

Some six or seven days later a sambuk answering to the description given was caught at Yambo and the owner arrested and an investigation ordered.

Whilst this investigation was actually in progress and within ten days of the robbery, my Netherlands colleague, who is temporarily in charge of Italian interests, the Italian consul being on thirty days' leave, received instructions to inform the local Government that unless the sum stolen was paid to him in gold within twenty-four hours the Italian sloop would be ordered to stand by for eventualities.

The Hedjaz Government paid the amount under protest, but the action of the Italian Government in behaving so arbitrarily has created a bad impression on the Government and population alike.

My Italian colleague, before his departure on leave, made no secret of his preference for the Nejd Government, and was, it is rumoured, instrumental in having certain articles of a propagandist nature inserted in Ibn Saud's newspaper published in Mecca.

I have, &amp;c.

S. R. JORDAN.

No. 153.

*Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 10.)*

(No. 142.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, October 10, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton for Colonial Office, No. 1 C:—

"Arrived Jeddah 9th October. Leaving to-day for Bahra, where Ibn Saud has made arrangements for our reception. Irak delegate will remain in Jeddah for the present. Exchanged visits of courtesy with King Ali yesterday. Explained to him that mission was not concerned in Nejd-Hedjaz hostilities, regarding which His Majesty's Government preserves neutrality. With this exception, political subjects were avoided."

(Repeated to Bagdad and Jerusalem; by bag to Alexandria.)

No. 154.

*Mr. Henderson to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 14.)*

(No. 363.)

(Telegraphic.) R

MY telegram No. 325.

Newspapers publish what is evidently an inspired account of mission to the Hedjaz.

It gives most of the information in my telegram under reference and with additional precision credits Ibn Saud with proposing that King Fuad should summon delegates from Moslem countries to form a commission under presidency of Egyptian delegate; that commission should proceed to the Hedjaz after its evacuation by Ali and Ibn Saud and take a plebiscite for election of a ruler who would govern under control of all Moslem countries.

(Repeated to Jeddah.)

No. 155.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Government of India (Foreign Department).—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received October 18.)*

(No. 145.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, October 18, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. [?1]303 S.

Medina is still besieged by Nejd forces, and Prophet's tomb is untouched. Syed[? na] [? Ham]-za's tomb, according to Indian pilgrims who left Medina on 1st October, is also intact as seen from the exterior.

(Repeated to Palestine, No. 104 M.)

[E 6383/10/91]

No. 156.

*Acting Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 19.)*

(No. 93. Secret.)

Sir,

Jeddah, September 28, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to enclose a report on the situation covering the period the 30th August to the 28th September.

Copies of this despatch and of its enclosure are being sent to India, Egypt, Khartum (through Port Sudan), Jerusalem, Bagdad, Beirut (for Damascus), Aden, Singapore, Bushire, Koweit, Bahrein and Muscat.

I have, &c.  
S. R. JORDAN.

Enclosure in No. 156.

*Report for the Period August 30 to September 28, 1925.*

(Secret.)

THE military situation during the period under report has been very quiet around Jeddah, and except for the periodical bombing of the Wahabi encampments on the road to Mecca no event of interest has taken place.

2. The aeroplanes go up daily, and flying at a height of 4,500-5,000 feet, drop two bombs each on the deserted tents of the enemy, who has, as soon as the planes approach, taken refuge amongst the rocky hills near by. The German aviators show little inclination for their work and run no unnecessary risks.

3. Some days ago 100 Arab soldiers from the Hail area laid down their arms and refused to man the trenches unless they were paid at least two months' salary, being six months in arrears at the time. The whole forces are now once more five months in arrears with their pay, and are showing the usual signs of discontent, but whether from chronic inertia or cowardice it never goes beyond the grousing stage.

4. At Yambo the Wahabis are rumoured to be right under the walls of the town on the port of Yambo, and the town of Yambo proper some miles inland is in their hands. Ibn Saud has stated his intention of attacking Yambo seriously [sic] and taking the place without further delay.

5. At Medina the situation is much more serious owing to the shortage of food due to the siege. A wireless message from Abdul Majid, the commandant of the Medina forces, to King Ali stated that he had food for twenty days only, and that unless supplies were forthcoming he would be forced to capitulate. I learn from Indian pilgrims from Medina that a bag of flour usually costing 4 medjidiehs now costs 120, and other food-stuffs are proportionally dear. The gardens surrounding the town have either been destroyed or are in Wahabi hands and offer no relief to the besieged. Some days ago a party of 300 of the defenders attempted a sortie into the gardens to collect dates and other fruit. No Wahabis were visible and the party advanced right up to the edge of the palm grove when a devastating fire was opened upon them by the hidden Wahabis. Their losses were numerous and they retired in disorder within the walls of the town.

6. King Ali informs me that he hopes to get three train-loads of provisions through to Medina from Maan, but as there were other of his people in the room at the time I imagine that this was merely to cheer them up, as the Wahabis must surely have taken up the line outside Medina to prevent such a possibility.

7. King Ali had originally intended to send two aeroplanes to Yambo as a base for bombing operations against the besieging forces of Medina, but owing to the proximity of the enemy around Yambo it was not practicable.

8. As I write this the local military brass band, which has been escorting the King to the Semalik in the Turkish fashion, is passing the agency playing "Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue" with very many variations. They have just ceased, and are now having a fierce argument as to what selection they will play next.

9. The financial situation during the period under report has been deplorable, and as far as I can ascertain not more than £1,000 has been received by the Government from outside the Hedjaz during the last month.

10. The King during the first week in September raised a forced loan of £5,000 in the town, but this was rendered possible only by his assuring the population that it was the last forced loan that would be raised. On the 14th instant things were so bad that one of the King's secretaries approached a tradesman in the town on behalf of His Majesty for the temporary loan of £10 to meet the daily expenses of the palace.

11. Rumours as to the floating of a loan in London are gaining ground, being spread by the Government with a view to keeping the soldiers and people quiet. These rumours have been further augmented by a telegram supposed to have been received from King Feisal from London to the effect that he had met representatives of two large British firms and that they were prepared to loan certain monies and asking for details of securities for same.

Many telegrams of this nature arrive, and there is little doubt but that many of them are manufactured locally.

12. No results are yet visible from the efforts of the Hedjaz people in Egypt to raise money on a mortgage on Ali's property, which no doubt is already heavily encumbered.

13. The Chief Kadi of Egypt, Sheikh Ali Maraghi, arrived in Jeddah accompanied by an interpreter on the 15th instant. Great preparations were made for his reception by the local people, and whilst here he was treated as a Royal guest. Sheikh Ali, who visited this agency, stated that he had hoped for his visit to be secret. This, however, was frustrated by Abdul Malik, the Hedjaz representative in Cairo, who sent a telegram to the local Government some days before his departure from Egypt. The local Government at once spread the rumour that the Egyptian Government, at the instigation of the British Government, were going to force Ibn Saud to end the war. The population of Jeddah were, however, forbidden to speak to or visit the Grand Kadi whilst here in order to prevent any false [sic] impressions that might be created thereby, and he was consequently, with the exception of the Egyptian consul and myself, continually being primed with the awful atrocities and savagery of Ibn Saud and his followers. Many Korans, recently printed by the Egyptian press, were distributed locally and the chief kadi eventually left for Mecca on the 20th instant. I learn from a reliable source that before the chief kadi left Jeddah, King Ali begged him to make peace at any price and gave him *carte blanche* as to conditions to be imposed.

14. The result of Hedjaz propaganda in India and Persia is having a marked effect and seems to have been swallowed wholly by the more ignorant Moslem communities in both those countries. Many telegrams from various guilds in Persia and India have been addressed to Ibn Saud at Jeddah in the most scurrilous terms. These only fall into the hands of the local people who are naturally highly elated. One such signed by Jamat Ali, Shah of Bombay, president of something not stated, reads as follows:—

"Mass meeting consisting of nearly 100,000 Moslems held on Friday 28th August, resolved to express its anger, hatred, vehemence and contempt towards Ibn Saud and his wild army and those Indian Moslem devotees of Najdis who have hitherto, owing to their personal motives, stubbornness, and against public opinion, supported Najdis, and consider them responsible for the present Moslem discontent and the violation of the sacred objects, and advises those fools to leave imprudent course and save religion," &c.

Another from Bombay, signed by Sirdar Suleiman Cassim Mitha, president also of something not stated, reads:—

"Mass meeting of Bombay Moslems held in Masjidejame on the 25th August. It was resolved to consider Ibn Saud's treacherous attacks on Medina and the bombardment of the Prophet's and Syedna Hamza's tombs, and his wild followers, deserving of the whole Moslem hatred and curses for irreligious acts," &c.

Also the Guild of Grocers in Tehran wired to the local Government offering troops, if necessary, to defeat the Wahabi "dogs."

Ibn Saud, through this agency, denied most emphatically having bombarded Medina or having touched the Kuba over the Prophet's tomb. In all his communications, however, he makes no mention of the Tomb of Hamaz, and it appears to me that it may be considered as destroyed. Owing to the great success attending the Hedjaz propaganda, Ibn Saud has now applied for permission for several of his followers to proceed to India to "expound the tenets of the Wahabi faith and contradict the lying propaganda spread by his enemies, who endeavour to gain by words what they cannot by arms." He is also endeavouring to purchase a powerful wireless installation for propaganda purposes.

Similar assurances as to the Prophet's tomb have been given to the King of Egypt by Ibn Saud in a message sent through the local Egyptian consul.

15. The local situation has been enlivened by the return of one Tawil, the Director of Customs, who has been mentioned in my predecessor's reports, and of Shereef Mohsen, also well known.

Tawil celebrated his return by causing dissension in the Government and eventually informed the King that Ahmed Saggoff, the Prime Minister, would have to resign or he would go away. The dispute at one stage became very acute, and there were rumours of public demonstrations in favour of one or the other. Eventually the King persuaded them to join hands and forces to fight the common enemy, and once more great threats ended in nothing.

16. The condenser on which the local people depend for their water supply has been handed over to a private company of local people to exploit. The conditions are that they should bear all expenses and supply the Government with 30 tons of water per day free. This will leave approximately 20 tons for sale by the exploiters and will provide them with a handsome profit.

Just prior to the handing over of the plant, the Government, having no money to buy coal, were breaking up and burning sambuks to keep the engines working. The present company state that they hope to produce 60 tons of water per day and are selling it at 6 piastres per kerosene tin. Provided they do not try to force quick profits and overload the condenser, which is in a very dilapidated state, the new arrangement should work satisfactorily.

17. The first anniversary of the accession of King Ali was celebrated on the 23rd September, and the consular corps was received at the palace at 10 A.M. In the evening there was a display of fireworks.

18. Seven slaves have been repatriated during the period under report. Six by the courtesy of the Senior Naval Officer, Red Sea Patrol, and one woman by the Khedivial Steamship Company.

19. Since writing the above I am informed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that three train-loads of provisions have entered Medina from Maan. This frankly appears to me to be impossible, as (1) the line has not been used for some time and must be covered in places with drift sand, and (2) it is hardly possible that the Wahabi forces who have been besieging Medina for some two months would not preclude the possibility of trains entering the town by taking up a portion of the line as they did in their last attack.

20. It is now practically certain that Wejh has surrendered to the Wahabis. The last Khedivial boat from that port evacuated 2 cannon, 38 cases shells and 10 cases s.a.a., together with 30 troops.

21. Some 100 or so cavalrymen yesterday refused to serve and are in barracks awaiting the arrival of money to pay their salaries, when they will return to Syria.

22. The Egyptian delegation has returned from Mecca and are leaving for Egypt by the Khedivial boat on the 30th September.

23. During the last few days the King has on several occasions visited the Italian consul, who has recently returned from short leave in Eritrea. It is rumoured that negotiations for the supply of munitions and a small loan are in progress, but I have no confirmation to date.

24. The local authorities have started the usual peace propaganda in connection with the arrival of Sir Gilbert Clayton, who is expected shortly to negotiate with Ibn Saud on outstanding questions between Great Britain and Nejd.

S. R. JORDAN.

No. 157.

*Acting British Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 21.)*

(No. 148.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Jeddah, October 21, 1925.*

PERSIAN delegation left for Mecca this morning. Head of delegation informed Belgian consul that his mission was primarily to verify acts of vandalism committed by Wahabis, and secondly to ascertain Ibn Saud's views as to possibilities of peace. He added that if Ibn Saud would not accept reasonable conditions Persia and Egypt would request Great Britain to enforce peace in Arabian Peninsula.

Head of the delegation is Persian Minister at Cairo.

[E 6539/12/91]

No. 158.

*Acting Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 26.)*

(No. 98.)  
Sir,

*Jeddah, October 6, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to confirm my telegram No. 140 of to-day's date, relative to the shipment to Jeddah of certain arms and ammunition recently released from Egypt.

These goods arrived at Jeddah in the Khedivial steamship "Mansourah" on the 5th instant, and figured on the ship's manifest as being destined for Massowa via Port Sudan.

The shipment was accompanied by a certain M. Gaston Panelli, of Rue Nubar Alexandria, who claims to be the owner of the goods.

On arrival at Jeddah M. Panelli proceeded to the quarantine offices, where he was met by King Ali, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Fuad, and the Director of Customs, Muhammad Tawil.

It appears that the shipment had not been paid for, and Panelli came to Jeddah to receive the money. That he was too optimistic as to the paying capacity of the Hedjaz Government is instanced by the fact that he made enquiries from the master of the "Mansourah" if he had a safe on board to lock up the proceeds.

After protracted negotiations lasting some four hours Panelli accepted a personal guarantee from the King against his property in Egypt and two receipts from the Director of Customs for the amount, guaranteed against customs money. Panelli thereupon returned on board and requested the master to land the cargo in Jeddah.

Despite the fact that the goods were manifested to Massowa via Port Sudan, the master of the "Mansourah" complied with this request, having, I ascertained, secret instructions from his head office in Alexandria to accept instructions from Panelli as to the port of disembarkation, irrespective of the instructions conveyed in the ship's manifest.

The goods were disembarked and nominally placed in transit on one of the small quarantine islands just off Jeddah until the money against the guarantees was received, but actually the goods are in the hands of the Hedjaz Government.

M. Panelli left by the "Mansourah" and is, I believe, returning to Alexandria by train from Port Sudan, spending several days in Khartum on the way.

As far as I can gather, the Egyptian Government were so keen to get rid of these goods, in view of the pending lawsuit, that they were not particular as to where they were landed so long as they were taken from Egypt and the Government thereby relieved of responsibility.

At the same time I must remark on the apparent deplorable methods of the Khedivial Steamship Company, who, knowing the inner history of these goods, accepted them under an obvious false declaration as to destination in order to delude the Governments concerned, and at the same time issued secret orders to the master of the vessel to accept orders from the owner, travelling as a passenger, in spite of the Merchant ship's papers. Such an action would appear to be a contravention of the Merchant Shipping Act and punishable as such, irrespective of the more serious charge of gun-running to prohibited areas under article 6 of the Arms Traffic Convention of 1919.

M. Gaston Panelli also received from the King concessions for the exploitation of all oil deposits in the Hedjaz and a concession to open an "issuing" bank, i.e., having authority to issue notes against funds.

These concessions were first secured by M. Panelli from the Hedjaz representative in Cairo, Abdul Malek, and were confirmed by King Ali during yesterday's negotiations. Their value, I consider, is nil.

A copy of this despatch is being sent to the Residency, Alexandria.

I have, &c.  
S. R. JORDAN.

No. 159.

*Mr. Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 26.)*

(Unnumbered.)  
(Telegraphic.)

MY telegram No. 147.

Italian consul refuses to communicate to the local authorities the gist of Ibn Saud's reply to Imam's telegram. Government claims, however, to have intercepted reply sent to Imam by wireless, and Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that it roughly conforms to some previous declarations as published in "Mokattam" and reported in Alexandria telegram No. 363.

Withdrawal of all members of the Shereef's family is his primary stipulation.

No. 160.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

(No. 68.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Foreign Office, October 26, 1925.*

PLEASE communicate with Mr. Philby by such means as lie in your power, and inform him that report has reached His Majesty's Government that he is actively criticising His Majesty's Government to natives of the Hedjaz. I find it hard to believe that he openly accuses His Majesty's Government of disgraceful behaviour, which, coming from an ex-official, would be impossible to excuse.

You should also remind him of previous warning against proceeding to interior, which is applicable now as when originally given.

You should communicate with Sir G. Clayton and warn him against Mr. Philby's activities. He will doubtless make it clear to Ibn Saud that Mr. Philby has no official status whatever, and that he has proceeded to Jeddah without authority and against wishes of His Majesty's Government.

No. 161.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 28.)*

(No. 152.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, October 28, 1925.*

IBN SAUD is concentrating fresh troops from Nejd between Mecca and Jeddah, and according to reports he intends attack on Jeddah soon after departure of Sir Gilbert Clayton.

Ibn Saud has announced in a Mecca paper that he will not be responsible for the repayment of any loan granted to the Hedjaz Government at Jeddah in the event of the capture of the town.

No. 162.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 29.)*

(No. 153.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, October 29, 1925.*

PERSIAN delegation states that results of their mission have been entirely satisfactory. Ibn Saud has assured them of all facilities for all Persian pilgrims, has given permission for the rebuilding of tombs which have been destroyed and even offered assistance.

I understand that full report will be published.  
(Sent to India and Cairo.)

No. 163.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 5.)*

(No. 154.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, November 4, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton for Colonial Office, No. 2C:—

"Agreement with Ibn Saud regarding Transjordan frontier was signed 2nd November. Frontier starts at intersection of meridian 39 with parallel 32; thence to intersection of meridian 37 with parallel 31-30; thence along meridian 37 to its intersection with parallel 31-25; thence to intersection of meridian 38 with parallel 30; thence along meridian 38 to its intersection with parallel 29-35.

"You will observe that I was obliged to give Kaf to Nejd for reasons which will be explained in my report, but I have secured for Transjordan practically all grazing grounds west of Wadi Sirhan, including four wadis in dispute.

"Ibn Saud has given undertaking to abstain from establishing a military centre in Kaf or district, and to prevent by all means at his disposal any incursions into Transjordan. He also agrees to maintain constant communication between his representative in Wadi Sirhan and chief British representative, Amman.

"Articles from Irak Agreement which are suitable for application to Transjordan have also been inserted *mutatis mutandis* in Transjordan Agreement."

(Repeated to Jerusalem.)

No. 164.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 5.)*

(No. 155.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, November 4, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton for Colonial Office, No. 3 C :—

"Agreement with Ibn Saud regarding Irak frontier affairs on lines indicated in my instructions was signed on 1st November. Agreement includes all points agreed upon at Koweit Conference, namely, punishment of raiding tribes and chiefs, abstention from direct correspondence with sheikhs, prohibition of forces from crossing frontier, of sheikhs from displaying flags. I have also provided for a tribunal consisting of equal number of Nejd and Irak members and neutral president agreed upon by both sides to sit for fixing responsibility and assessing damages resulting from future raids.

"With regard to points about which no agreement was reached at Koweit, I have succeeded in obtaining Ibn Saud's assent to undertaking formulated by Colonel Knox at Koweit, by which both Irak and Nejd bind themselves to discourage migration of tribes from one country to the other (High Commissioner's confidential despatch of 12th March, 1925, refers). I have also obtained Ibn Saud's assent to a clause whereby tribes called up for military service must take their families and flocks with them.

"With regard to extradition, I resisted Ibn Saud's insistent demand and arranged that question of extradition of non-political offenders should form subject of friendly negotiations between Irak and Nejd with a view to discussing an extradition treaty on lines usually adopted between neighbouring States.

"With regard to restitution of loot, I was precluded from arriving at an actual liquidation chiefly owing to fact that the Irak delegate was not in possession of the necessary details. Nevertheless, I have arranged that liquidation of claims should be undertaken by tribunal described above or similar tribunal, which should be called within six months of ratification of agreement, and that decisions will be final."

(Sent to Bagdad.)

No. 165.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to High Commissioner, Palestine.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received November 5.)*

(No. 158.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, November 5, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Sir G. Clayton :—

"I have been asked by Ibn Saud to request you to forward the following message in Arabic by messenger to Abdallah-bin-Akil, Governor of Jauf :—

"An agreement has been concluded by which Karaya-al-Malh is to belong to Jauf. You should instruct all our tribes to remain absolutely quiet awaiting our detailed instructions.—IBN SAUD."

(Repeated to Foreign Office for communication to Colonial Office.)

No. 166.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 6.)*

(No. 159.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, November 6, 1925.

STEAMSHIP "Keneh," of Khedivial Mail Line, was fired upon by hostile forces on 4th November outside the port of Yambo, and prevented from entering. One passenger was wounded by wooden splinter.

Forces were situated to west of the town and some distance from walls, and were undoubtedly tribesmen under orders of Ibn Saud.

No. 167.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Sir G. Lloyd (Cairo).*

(No. 261.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, November 6, 1925.

MR. HENDERSON'S telegram No. 352 of 6th October: Egyptian mediation in Hedjaz conflict.

You should inform King Fuad that His Majesty's Government regret that they cannot undertake to advise His Majesty in this matter. They are of course anxious to see peace restored in the Hedjaz in order that British Moslems may be able to make the pilgrimage in comfort and security. At the same time, they feel that the future régime in the Hedjaz is a matter for the decision of Moslems alone, and that they cannot themselves properly intervene in what is primarily a religious question.

Please repeat to Jeddah.

No. 168.

*Sir G. Lloyd to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 10.)*

(No. 391.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, November 10, 1925.

FOLLOWING sent to Jeddah, No. 95, to-day :—

"Khedivial Mail Line report that steamship 'Keneh' on approaching Yambo on 4th November was subjected to heavy rifle fire, that ship was struck in several places, one passenger being slightly wounded, and that captain in consequence proceeded direct to Jeddah, omitting Yambo.

"Company desire information as to position at Yambo with a view to obviating further risk to their ships. I should be glad of a telegraphic reply."

No. 169.

*Mr. Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 10.)*

(No. 160.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, November 10, 1925.

I AM informed that Medina garrison sent a messenger to Ibn Saud asking him to come personally to receive submission of garrison in order to prevent possible excesses by investing troops. Ibn Saud immediately despatched messengers to verify request, and promised to come personally or send his brother Mohammed.

(Sent to Cairo and Jerusalem.)

No. 170.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

(No. 69.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, November 10, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 159 of 6th November: Firing by Wahabis upon the steamship "Keneh" at Yambo.

In view of recent action of Khedivial Company in landing war material at Jeddah under false manifest, action of Wahabis is not unnatural. If Khedivial Company's representative complains to you, you should point this out to him.

On the other hand, firing upon a ship approaching an unblockaded port is not the proper way to prevent it from carrying munitions to the enemy. You should therefore convey a mild protest to Ibn Saud, and express the hope that there will be no recurrence of this incident.

No. 171.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir G. Lloyd.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received November 12.)*

(No. 161.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram of 10th November.

I am informed by local authorities that Wahabis have been driven back from Yambo and entry is now safe.

Steamship "Borulos" should have called there 10th November. Company could ascertain latest situation from her by wireless.

Jeddah, November 12, 1925.

No. 172.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 15.)*

(No. 162.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram No. 68.

Philby disappeared from Jeddah 11th November and is stated to have proceeded southwards in sailing vessel.

Probable destination is Lith, as Ibn Saud informed him he would see him after conference and that he should come by way of Rabigh.

Jeddah, November 13, 1925.

[E 7053/10/91]

No. 173.

*Acting Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 17.)*

(No. 102. Secret.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to enclose a report on the situation covering the period 29th September to 29th October.

2. Copies of this despatch and of its enclosure are being sent to India, Egypt, Khartum (through Port Sudan), Jerusalem, Bagdad, Beirut (for Damascus), Aden, Singapore, Bushire, Koweit, Bahrain and Muskat.

I have, &c.  
S. R. JORDAN.

Enclosure in No. 173.

Report for the Period September 29—October 29, 1925.

(Secret.)

WITH the exception of the Wahabi attacks on Yambo, no events of military importance have taken place during the period under report.

2. The situation at Jeddah has, except for internecine strife, been quiet, hardly a shot being fired by either side. Bombing operations continue, but since the arrival of Brigadier-General Sir Gilbert Clayton at Bahra the Hedjaz Government have ceased bombing in that direction and would appear to be concentrating on Rabigh, which is Ibn Saud's chief supply port.

3. The German ammunition and rifles held up for so long by the Egyptian authorities were released during the period under report and shipped to Jeddah on the steamship "Mansourah" of the Khedivial line of steamers. This material, consisting of 290 cases of ammunition and 1,000 rifles, has now been paid for and stored in Jeddah.

4. The soldiers, and particularly the Bedouin, are selling the ammunition issued to them in the local market in order to raise money to buy food. The whole force is now six months in arrears with their pay, and there seems to be but small hope of their receiving anything in the immediate future.

5. The discontent among the troops is manifesting itself in the usual way. Continually small parties desert to the Wahabis, and others lay down their arms and refuse to man the trenches. Also two military godowns full of stores were raided and the proceeds distributed. Owing to the numbers concerned the Government are practically powerless and endeavour to keep the troops in the trenches by the spreading of false rumours and fulsome promises which never materialise.

A few officers discontented with Tahsin Pasha, the commander-in-chief, and several of the Ministry went so far as to placard the town with proclamations to the effect that Tahsin Pasha, Sheikh Fuad, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Ahmed Saggaf, for a short time Prime Minister but lately private secretary and chief adviser to the King, should be shot for treason or deported. Several arrests were made, but again the Government were too weak or pusillanimous to take strong action and on the appearance of a second declaration the arrested persons were released.

6. The Palestinians still engaged are continually applying to me for repatriation, which is refused on the instructions of the Palestine Government. But the local Government have now agreed to send such as wish to return to Palestine to Akaba in one of the smaller ships of the Hedjaz fleet.

7. From rumours the situation at Medina would again appear to be critical. The King is supposed to have received from Abdul Majid, commander of the Medina forces, a telegram stating that he could not be expected to hold out much longer as food was short and discontent was rife. The population of Medina, according to Indian pilgrims who left there as late as the 1st October, would all appear to be leaving the town actually and living under the protection of the Wahabis in the country round about Medina, where they can obtain supplies from the desert Arabs.

The three trains referred to in my last report did actually arrive in Medina, and the fact is admitted in the Mecca paper, Ibn Saud's official organ, but it adds that precautions have been taken to prevent a recurrence of such an event in the future.

The Indian pilgrims who left Medina on the 1st October state definitely that the Prophet's tomb is untouched, and also that the Syedna Hamza tomb as seen from the exterior is intact, as they were quite close to it and could see it distinctly.

8. At Yambo the Wahabis have been attacking on and off for some weeks past, but although they advanced right up to the mud walls surrounding the town on the landward side they were unable to press their advantage and eventually retired, and are once more encamped some distance from the town. The casualties were not great on either side, and the popular belief that the desert Arab is a wonderful fighter and absolutely fearless would appear to be badly discredited by the events which have occurred during the present hostilities between the Nejd and Hedjaz.

9. Wejh, which, in my last report I stated was rumoured to have fallen, is still holding out, and the Wahabis do not appear to be very concerned about it, as there is but a small garrison, incapable of any offensive action, in the town.

10. The local Government at one time during the month seriously thought of occupying Kumfudah. It appears that several tribes in that direction are discontented and appealed to King Ali for help. The military and naval experts considered the occupation feasible and drew up plans accordingly. Two of the ships of the fleet were to carry some 200 soldiers and disembark them under aeroplane protection, and the dissatisfied tribes were to attack the town. But whether from want of courage or lack of cohesion the plans were never put into force, and have, I understand, been filed for a future occasion.

11. It is now quite certain that Ibn Saud intends to make a determined effort to capture Jeddah soon after the conference at Bahra is completed, and to this effect troops have been arriving from Riyadh in large numbers, and people arriving in Jeddah from Mecca state that six fresh "bairaks" (standards) are now on the Jeddah-Mecca road. This, with the three "bairaks" which have been investing Jeddah for months past, would probably bring the attacking force up to about 3,000–3,500 men. More are stated to be arriving around Mecca daily, and Mecca people speak confidently of success in the near future. Eight guns are also supposed to be in position to bombard Jeddah when required.

12. The financial situation is becoming more impossible as time goes on. During the period under review only £2,000 would appear to have been received, and that from Sayyid Saggaf, of Singapore. A draft for £6,000 from ex-King Hussein was also received, but to date has not been met by the banks concerned. This no doubt will be remedied in the near future. Against this the Government have had to pay for the munitions from Egypt from their smaller reserve. No money whatever has been paid to the forces.

After several Syrian officers, who were feeling the pressing need of liquid assets, had been to the Ministry of Finance and said unpleasant things to the Minister as to the disposal of funds received from the local administrations and demanded to see the accounts, a most unfortunate accident occurred. It appears from the Minister's statement that, requiring a stimulant after the delegation of officers had left, he ordered a coffee, and apparently a spark from the bottom of the "ibrik" (coffee-pot) fell on the account books and must have started smouldering and eventually broke into flame when he was absent during the course of the afternoon. A set of new books has been prepared.

13. The delegation from India is rumoured to be bringing a sum of approximately 250,000 rupees raised during the successful Hedjaz propaganda campaign. It appears also that Egypt is sending the usual charity money to Medina through the local authorities on the advice of the Egyptian consul, who is stupidly pro-Shereefian. This is rather a pity, as most of it will surely be side-tracked for military purposes.

14. During the month the usual autumnal influx of peacemakers has been very pronounced. Firstly the Egyptian delegation and lately the Persian. The Imam Yahya had also sent a rather peremptory telegram to both sides stating that the war is causing much prejudice to and trouble amongst the world's Moslems, and he proposes to send a delegation to bring about peace. The Hedjaz Government replied accepting his offer, and Ibn Saud, as far as can be ascertained, replied much in the same strain as his reply to the Egyptian delegation and his published declarations on the subject.

Both the Egyptian and Persian delegations left Jeddah primed by the local people with the tales of savagery and vandalism of Ibn Saud and his forces, and both returned and openly stated that they thought him a great man, but that his followers were rather wild.

There appears to be little doubt that the Italians have prompted the Imam Yahya to make his peace move, and in fact the telegrams were sent through the local Italian consul, who refuses to divulge the reply received from Ibn Saud to either the Hedjaz Government or to his colleagues. As the Imam Yahya and the Shereefian family are both related, being direct descendants of the Prophet, it is possible that Ibn Saud may not welcome his intrusion as he (Ibn Saud) has no claim to descent from the Prophet.

15. It is confidently asserted that a company is being formed in Mecca to provide motor transport for the pilgrims from Rabigh or Jeddah to Mecca and *vice versa* during the coming pilgrim season.

16. King Ali has intimated his intention of allowing the pilgrimage to pass through Jeddah, but should hostilities not cease before the date of the pilgrimage Ibn Saud would probably object to this proceeding and insist on the pilgrimage passing through Rabigh.

17. It is also anticipated that the Indian delegation will be received coldly by Ibn Saud in view of the demonstrations and successful propaganda conducted against him in India recently.

18. The syndicate which took over the working of the condenser on trial for one month has ceased to function owing to the exactions of the Government over and above the contract stipulations.

19. During the period under report eleven slaves have been repatriated and five are awaiting repatriation.

20. Mr. Philby has arrived in Jeddah and is the guest of local Arabs by the name of Nazir. His activities would appear to have been restricted to endeavouring to get into touch with Ibn Saud or his first lieutenant, Hafiz Wahba.

S. R. JORDAN.

[E 7054/10/91]

No. 174.

Acting Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 17.)

(No. 103.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to state that in an interview with Sheikh Fuad, the Hedjaz Minister for Foreign Affairs, he stated that there would appear to be no doubt that Ibn Saud is massing troops before Jeddah with the intention of attacking. He adds, however, that the local garrison is quite confident of being able to repulse the Wahabi attacks but that they are not sufficiently strong to undertake any offensive movement.

Jeddah, October 29, 1925.

2. He further states that, even if Jeddah is captured by the Wahabis, the war would not be at an end as King Ali and his followers would retire on the Yemen in the various ships at their disposal and re-form their forces and attack from that side with the active sympathy of the Imam Yahya, with whom the Hedjaz has an understanding, though no actual treaty exists between the two countries. He drew attention to the blood relationship existing between the Imam and King Ali, both being direct descendants of the Prophet, and pointed out that it was extremely unlikely that either would allow Ibn Saud, who could not claim such illustrious antecedents, to occupy the Holy Places. He further stated that the Imam Yahya regarded with strong disfavour the territorial acquisitions of Ibn Saud, and that sooner or later there would be hostilities between these two powers for supremacy in the Arabian peninsula.

3. He also asserts that he is convinced that Ibn Saud, despite his many declarations to the contrary, has no intention of evacuating the Hedjaz unless driven from it. He bases this assertion on the fact that Ibn Saud is well aware that the dissensions amongst the world's Moslems will render difficult any attempt at international Moslem control of the Hedjaz, and that he will consequently remain in possession for years before an effective administration could be formed, during which time he would so consolidate his position as to assure his domination of the territory in future years. Against this, Sheikh Fuad states that the Hedjaz would be a source of weakness for Ibn Saud, as, in order to make the pilgrimage possible for the many various Moslem sects, it would necessitate certain fundamental modifications in the Wahabi faith which would be unacceptable to the majority of Ibn Saud's followers, and would consequently lead to internecine strife and dissension. He did not, however, specify any particular modification involved.

4. The publication of the supposed details, or rather conclusions, of Sheikh Maragha after his visit to Ibn Saud in the "Mokattam" has produced a very unfavourable impression in the local Government, and the position of the Egyptian consul, who has for months back been very pro-Shereefian, is at present unenviable. In this connection Sheikh Fuad states that the Egyptian delegation grossly deceived them, and that they undoubtedly exceeded their instructions by publishing details of the military situation of Jeddah and revealing secrets of military value. The only conclusion that the Hedjaz Government can draw is that Egypt is desirous of annexing or occupying the Hedjaz. (In this connection please see my telegram No. 123 of the 3rd August.) Also that the article mentioned had had quite the contrary effect to that desired, as the army has come in masses [sic] to King Ali to assure him of their allegiance, and stated that they would lay down their lives in defence of Jeddah, with or without pay. I, personally, consider this to refer to the ravings of one Tahsin Pasha, the local commander-in-chief, who visited the Egyptian consul and expressed his regret for the publication, which was undoubtedly a secret communiqué, issued as a feeler, from the Egyptian Palace, and informed the consul that the only effect of this publication has been to strengthen their determination to fight to the last man.

5. I should add that Sheikh Fuad has recently become very unpopular in Jeddah, and it is not at all improbable that he may be dismissed (for such is the way with Ministers in this country) from the foreign secretariat at no distant date.

6. The Persian delegation returned from Mecca two days ago, and have expressed to me their extreme satisfaction with the results obtained by their mission. They have reached an agreement with Ibn Saud on all questions affecting the pilgrimage in future as far as concerns the Persian sects, chiefly Shiabs, and also obtained permission to reconstruct the damaged and destroyed tombs, Ibn Saud apparently having gone so far as to offer assistance in this connection.

They state that, from their investigations, the acts of vandalism were committed before the arrival of Ibn Saud at the seat of battle, and when all is said and done were infinitesimal in comparison with the atrocities committed by certain belligerent European Powers during the late war. I understand that the results of their investigations will be published shortly throughout Persia and the Moslem world.

7. A copy of this despatch is being sent to His Majesty's High Commissioner for Egypt.

I have, &c.

S. R. JORDAN.

No. 175.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).*(No. 279.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, November 18, 1925.

FOLLOWING for Sir G. Clayton from Secretary of State for Colonies:—

" You will have seen from my earlier message that I approve of your proceeding to Jerusalem and Bagdad to complete the good work already done by you with Ibn Saud. It has occurred to me that you might perhaps be willing during your stay in the Middle East to undertake another negotiation, for which your experience and qualifications suit you. As you probably know, we have been trying for the last three years to conclude a treaty with the Imam of the Yemen. For various reasons, among which the most important was the temporary occupation of Hodeidah by the Idrisi, these negotiations have not yet come to a successful issue. The Imam has asked that a British envoy should be sent to Sanaa in order to clear up the few outstanding points. The present position is that he is actively, if not openly, encouraging his followers to encroach upon the Aden Protectorate, and that air action has had to be taken in support of the protectorate tribes. This action has not proved entirely successful, and His Majesty's Government are anxious to use every effort to establish permanent conditions in the hinterland of Aden without recourse to armed force. They therefore desire to accede to the Imam's request and to send an envoy to Sanaa. It is clearly desirable that the envoy should proceed with the least possible delay, in order that further complications on the protectorate frontier may be avoided. If you would agree to extend your period of employment under the Colonial Office for this purpose you might proceed by sea to Aden from Irak after completing your discussions with the High Commissioner and Irak Government at Bagdad, and the Resident, Aden, to whom this telegram is being repeated, would, in the meanwhile, be able to make the necessary arrangements for your journey to Sanaa and your reception by the Imam. I should explain that proposed mission has support of Resident, Aden, who has asked His Majesty's Government to nominate officer for purpose, as no local political officer can be spared. If you accept, full instructions will be sent to you in due course."

Please repeat to Aden.

No. 176.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 20.)*(No. 163.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, November 19, 1925.

ARABIAN tribal troops manning Jeddah defences broke into open revolt on 17th November, and representatives of each section demonstrated before King's palace. The King, Ali, pacified them by promising them their arrears of pay or a portion of same within forty-eight hours. Later, in consultation with the soldiers, [ ? delay] was increased to ten days.

This morning remaining sections of forces, composed of the palace and Syrian troops, also revolted, and only consented to man trenches on King's assurance of payment of arrears before [ ? 23rd November] or repatriation. Discipline no longer exists in the army, and whether Ali and officers will be able to reassert their authority or not is for the present uncertain.

(Sent to Cairo and Jerusalem.)

No. 177.

*Lord Lloyd to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 20.)*

(No. 408.)

(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, November 20, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 279.

Following for Secretary of State for Colonies from Sir G. Clayton:—

" Ready to undertake mission to Yemen. Should have preferred to discuss instructions on present situation and requirements in London, but as time apparently does not permit will proceed from Bagdad by sea via Basra to Aden. Presume full instructions and necessary information will be sent direct to Aden together with credentials, which were of great use in recent negotiations.

" Request urgently services of Antonius as secretary. He was largely instrumental in successful result with Ibn Saud.

" May Palestine Government be authorised to advance me up to £1,500? I can then liquidate expenses up to date and have sufficient balance in hand.

" I leave for Jerusalem 22nd November, and thence for Bagdad 26th November.

" Please inform my wife of my movements.

" I acknowledge gratefully receipt of your telegram of 16th November."

(Repeated to Aden.)

No. 178.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Government of India (Foreign Department).—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received November 27.)*

(No. 165.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, November 26, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 1515 S.

Fall of Medina is rumoured since the 20th, but local Government has issued a *démenti*. Nevertheless, the situation there would appear to be critical, and if the town has not capitulated it is not expected that it can hold out much longer. Ibn Saud's son actually left Mecca with chosen troops to receive submission on 9th November, but I have no confirmation of actual surrendering of the garrison to date.

(Sent to Cairo, Jerusalem and Foreign Office with reference to my telegram No. 164.)

No. 179.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 29.)*

(No. 166.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, November 29, 1925.

MY telegram No. 163.

Further revolt of Palestinian and Syrian troops occurred this morning. They barricaded themselves in large mosque, and refused to leave as a protest against non-payment of wages, &c. Mosque was surrounded by King's bodyguard and other Arab troops.

In order to prevent disorder, and in view of soldiers' legitimate grievance, my Italian colleague, temporarily charged with French interests, and myself protested against offensive action being taken against nationals of our respective mandated territories. Ali has promised to repatriate remaining Palestinian and Syrian nationals in seven days. Despatch follows.

(Repeated to Cairo and Jerusalem.)

[E 7385/10/91]

No. 180.

*Acting Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 30.)*

(No. 105.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a copy of the declaration as to the future control of the Hedjaz territories made by Ibn Saud, Sultan of Nejd, and published in the "Umm-a-Kura," the only paper appearing in Mecca, on the 6th November (19th Rabi-al-Thani, 1344).

2. Copies of this despatch and of its enclosure are being sent to India, Egypt, Jerusalem, Bagdad, Beirut, Aden and Khartum.

I have, &amp;c.

S. R. JORDAN.

Enclosure in No. 180.

*Declaration published in "Umm-al-Kura" No. 45, dated 19th Rabi-al-Thani, 1344, (November 6, 1925.)*

(Translation.)

HIS Highness the Sultan having openly declared that his aims and intentions in coming to the Hedjaz were to purify the Ka'aba and to put the Government in the hands of the people in co-operation with the Islamic world, we could not see that His Highness diverted from this path since his forces were on the outskirts of the Hedjaz until he occupied the greater number of the towns of the Hedjaz. The more he gains footing in the Hedjaz the more his aims are made clear to the people; thus such desires will be developed to obtain a practical aspect.

Having seen the anxiety of the Moslems as to the result of the war and the fate of the country, His Highness the Sultan decided to make known to all the world his aims and intentions towards the Hedjaz. The following is an extract from letters which His Highness has sent to His Majesty the King of Egypt, His Highness the Ameer of Afghanistan, the Persian and Irak Governments, the Khilafat Committee, &c.:

"From Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdul Rahman-al-Feisal-al-Saud to Ahlul Hadith and Ulama Committee of India, El Majlis-el-Islami-el-A'la of Palestine, Sheikh Badu-ul-Din-el-Mohadith of Damascus, certain kings and princes of North Africa, and all who are interested in the Holy Land among Moslem ulamas, princes and leaders of parties.

"Salaams.

"I hope you are in the best of health, and I am glad to unite my endeavours to yours and to those who are acting for the welfare of Islam. I am quite confident that our united efforts will result in a pleasant future for all the Moslem nations.

"I am not among the lovers of war and its evils. Nothing is more to me than peace and tranquillity, calmness and prosperity and to be devoted to reform. But our neighbours the Sherifs have compelled me to take up arms and to wage war for the last fifteen years for no other reason than the greed for what we are in possession of. They blocked our way to the path of God and 'Al Masjid-el-Haram' which God has ordered to be open to neighbours and people living far off. They defiled 'Al Bait-u-et-Tahir' committing all vices that no Moslem can bear.

"We have thus declared 'Al Jihad' to purify the sacred places and the whole of the Holy Land from this family who blocked the way that leads to an understanding good impressions by committing such evils.

"I, in the name of God, do not intend to spread my rule over the Hedjaz nor to annex it; but the Hedjaz is a trust in my hands until the time comes when the people of the Hedjaz can choose their ruler from among themselves, who will be dependent to the Islamic World under the superintendence of Moslem nations who showed considerable zeal in that affair such as the Indians and some others.

"The principle which we have declared to the Moslem world and which we are still fighting for can be summarised as follows:—

"1. The Hedjaz is for the Hedjazis from the Government point of view, but for all the Moslem world in respect of their rights in the country.

"2. Polling for the election of the Governor of the Hedjaz will be carried out under the superintendence of the Moslem world at a time which will be fixed later. We shall then hand over the trust which is in our hands to that Governor on the following terms:—

"(1.) That the principal law for all the people should be the Islamic law.

"(2.) That the Hedjaz Government should be independent in itself, but should not declare war. Measures that would lead to the above should be observed.

"(3.) That the Hedjaz Government should not conclude political agreements with any Government whatever.

"(4.) That the Hedjaz Government should not conclude economic agreements with any non-Moslem Power.

"(5.) That the Hedjaz boundaries, financial and judicial laws will be put under the charge of the delegates from the Moslem world, whose number will be proportional to the prestige of a country in the Moslem and Arab world. Members also should be taken from the Khilafat Committee, Ahlul Hadith Committee and Ulama Committee in India, and other parties who represent Moslems in countries where no Moslem Government exists."

No. 181.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 1.)*

(No. 167.)

(Telegraphic.)

Jeddah, December 1, 1925.  
ALI has telegraphed to Hussein and Feisal informing them that if money is not received immediately he will be forced to leave Jeddah.

(Sent to Bagdad, Cairo, Palestine and India.)

No. 182.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 4.)*

(No. 169.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, December 4, 1925.  
MECCA has been bombed on several occasions within the last week by Hedjaz aeroplanes owned by non-Moslem aviators.

Ibn Saud is protesting against double desecration of Harram in Mecca newspaper.

(Sent to India, Cairo, Jerusalem and Bagdad.)

No. 183.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 4.)*

(No. 170.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Jeddah, December 4, 1925.  
LOCAL authorities on 2nd December forced by menaces an Indian merchant representing a Syrian firm in Jeddah to sign a telegram addressed to agent of firm in Medina instructing him to pay over to garrison commander £500 gold which he had received in Jeddah. Money has not been paid to Indian, who is now responsible for this sum to his principals.

I propose to insist on immediate payment of this amount, and suggest that if payment is not made I may make arrangements to instruct Red Sea sloops to seize a Hedjaz Government ship as security.

You will realise necessity for putting an end to this form of robbery on the part of local authorities, who are penniless.

No. 184.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 5.)*

(No. 171.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

FOREIGN consuls at Jeddah last evening jointly informed King Ali that their respective Governments would hold him personally responsible for loss or damage to life or property caused to their respective nationals as a result of the bombing of Mecca.

Ali promised to take all possible precautions to safeguard foreign subjects.  
(Sent to India and Cairo.)

[E 7507/10/91]

No. 185.

*Vice-Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 7.)*

(No. 106.)

Sir,

WITH reference to Foreign Office telegram No. 69 of the 10th instant, I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of my letter to Ibn Saud, together with a translation of his reply to same.

2. Other than the letters of which copies were forwarded under cover of my despatch No. 104 of the 10th November, the local agent of the Khedivial Mail Line has taken no further action.

3. A copy of this letter and of its enclosures is being sent to the Residency, Cairo.

I have, &c.  
S. R. JORDAN.

Enclosure 1 in No. 185.

*Copy of Letter from the Acting British Agent and Consul, Jeddah, to Ibn Saud, dated November 12, 1925.*

(After respects.)

I AM directed by His Majesty's Government to inform your Highness that they learn with regret that the steamship "Keneh" of the Khedivial Mail Line, flying the British flag, was fired upon by certain of your Highness's forces whilst endeavouring to enter the port of Yambo on the 4th instant, and that one passenger was wounded and a beast killed by the rifle fire.

His Majesty's Government formally protest against this action on the part of the investing forces and express the hope that there will be no recurrence of this incident.

Compliments.

Enclosure 2 in No. 185.

*Translation of Letter from Ibn Saud to the Acting British Agent and Consul, Jeddah, dated 1st Jamad-al-Arvah, 1344 (November 18, 1925).*

(After respects.)

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 12th November, 1925. I regret that such incident has happened, especially to a ship under the flag of our friend Britain.

Be sure that our besieging troops are quite ignorant of this. Strict orders were issued to the officer in charge not to repeat such a mistake.

With respects.

No. 186.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah)*

(No. 72.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, December 8, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 170 of 4th December: Threat to British Indian merchant As the money will have been paid in Medina from funds belonging to the Syrian firm, it will be well to act in concert with the French consul unless there are local objections of which I am unaware.

To seize ship in manner proposed is most unusual procedure and can hardly be defended until the demand for repayment has been made without success. On the other hand, I realise that unusual circumstances require unusual methods.

While, then, it is desirable to avoid, if possible, actual seizure of ship, you may inform Hedjaz Government that you will take action in sense suggested in penultimate paragraph of your telegram if satisfaction is not forthcoming. You will, however, understand that actual seizure should only be made if all other steps fail.

No. 187.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 10.)*

(No. 180.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Jeddah, December 10, 1925.*

IN view of situation at Jeddah and rumours of capitulation of Medina, His Majesty's Government might envisage possibility of Ali requesting permission to proceed to Cyprus, though indications would tend to prove that he intends to go to Yemen (vide second paragraph of my despatch No. 103), with royal slaves and certain chosen Arab troops numbering in all about 200, despite advice to place himself at disposal of British Government given by Persian consul-general, lately returned from Medina, the local Governor and other influential people.

Should he proceed to Yemen it would appear seriously to prejudice possibility of peace in Arabia for a long time to come, and I suspect Italian Government is not unaware of Ali's intentions.

Ali is well liked in Syria and Transjordan and may be useful to His Majesty's Government at some future date.

The information contained in paragraph 13 of my report under cover of my despatch No. 112 is confirmed.

No. 188.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 11.)*

(No. 182.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, December 11, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 179.

Ibn Saud's forces entered Medina 5th December.

Jeddah will probably capitulate in a few days.

(Sent to India, Cairo and Jerusalem.)

No. 189.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 12.)*

[Via H.M.S. "Cornflower."]

(No. 183.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Jeddah, December 11, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 180.

I am confidentially informed that Ali is afraid of appealing to His Majesty's Government for fear of rebuff. He states that either he will load aeroplanes and machine guns and ammunition on board steamer and proceed to Yemen, or, if this

should not be practicable, he will destroy all possible to avoid it falling into Ibn Saud's hands. He states that it will take at least fifteen days for Ibn Saud to transfer guns, &c., from Medina, and is anxiously awaiting arrival of Indian delegation headed by Bari on 17th December, also result of mission to Egypt. Ali is unaware that Sheikh of Hedjazis and Harb troops, representing approximately three-quarters of total forces, last evening sent a messenger to Ibn Saud tendering their submission and asking for instructions.

Reply should arrive afternoon of 12th December.

You will realise that a quantity of war material is being transferred to the Imam of Yemen. I would suggest that I may be instructed to give Ali to understand that His Majesty's Government would not be averse to his presence on British territory. I should also like instructions as to whether I may tacitly encourage destruction of war material should Ali seek protection.

Reply requested urgently.

No. 190.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 15.)*

[Via H.M.S. "Cornflower."]

(No. 185.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Jeddah, December 14, 1925.*

KING ALI begs that I, as His Britannic Majesty's representative, will act as intermediary between him and his people and Ibn Saud for immediate submission of Jeddah.

Such action on the part of His Majesty's Government can but add to British prestige in this country.

Ali places himself at the disposal of His Majesty's Government and prays he may be allowed to reside at [ ? Jo ]rdan, Palestine or Irak, if possible, and, if not, at any other place designated.

As situation is critical, may I have an urgent reply via Admiralty wireless to H.M.S. "Cornflower" here *re* mediation, and also regarding Ali's request if convenient?

(Sent to Jerusalem, Bagdad, India and Cairo.)

No. 191.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

(No. 74.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Foreign Office, December 15, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 185 of 14th December: Situation at Jeddah.

You may act as proposed as intermediary in the surrender of Jeddah.

It would be best for Ali to go to Cyprus in first instance, as it would give less provocation to Ibn Saud. There would probably be no difficulty about his reception there. We will, however, bear in mind his desire to live in Palestine or Irak, and will ascertain whether there is any local objection.

If necessary would it be feasible to grant asylum to Ali on board H.M.S. "Cornflower"?

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 316.)

No. 192.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 16.)*

[Via H.M.S. "Cornflower."]

(No. 186.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, December 16, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 74.

Ali begs that he may be allowed to proceed to Palestine or Irak direct. He would appear to be in mortal fear of his father and does not wish to go to Cyprus even for a few days.

Ali can be granted asylum on board H.M.S. "Cornflower" if necessary. Respectfully suggest that one of His Majesty's ships be placed at Ali's disposal for transport to destination decided upon.

I hope to meet Ibn Saud to-morrow and to obtain a delay of five to seven days to enable Ali to leave before entry of former into Jeddah.

May all urgent communications be sent via Admiralty wireless and H.M.S. "Cornflower," please, owing to delay over local cable?

(Sent to India, Jerusalem, Bagdad and Cairo.)

No. 193.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

[By Admiralty Wireless to H.M.S. "Cornflower."]

(No. 75.)  
(Telegraphic.) R. *Foreign Office, December 17, 1925.*  
YOUR telegram No. 186 of 16th December: Future place of residence for Emir Ali.

You may inform Emir Ali that King Feisal will be glad to afford him asylum at Bagdad.

We are communicating with Admiralty regarding possibility of passage as far as Aden on one of His Majesty's ships. A further telegram will be sent to you in due course.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 319.)

No. 194.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 19.)*

[Via H.M.S. "Clematis."]

(No. 188.)  
(Telegraphic.) R. *Jeddah, December 19, 1925.*  
ALI officially abdicated this afternoon, and a Provisional Government has been established under local Governor.  
Entry into Jeddah of Ibn Saud's forces has been provisionally fixed for Wednesday next.  
(Sent to India, Jerusalem, Bagdad and Cairo.)

No. 195.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

[By Admiralty Wireless to H.M.S. "Clematis."]

(No. 78.)  
(Telegraphic.) R. *Foreign Office, December 19, 1925.*  
YOUR telegram No. 187 of 18th December: Departure of King Ali.  
Admiralty are issuing orders for H.M.S. "Clematis" to convey Ali direct to Aden. Accommodation is so limited that there will be room for only one attendant at the most.

Resident at Aden is being asked to arrange for reception of Ali and for his onward passage to Basra, for which it is regretted none of His Majesty's ships will be available.

No. 196.

*Consul, Damascus, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 21.)*

(No. 41.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Damascus, December 21, 1925.*

NEJD representative informs me that, having received from the Sultan telegram notifying capture of Jeddah, he proposes to invite local authorities and consuls to reception in celebration of the event, but asks advice on the subject.

I am replying that I cannot advise. If he gives the reception should I attend? Please telegraph instructions urgently as to attitude I should adopt.

[E 7991/10/91]

No. 197.

*Vice-Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 22.)*

(No. 112. Secret.)

Sir,

*Jeddah, November 27, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to enclose a report on the situation covering the period the 30th October to the 27th November.

2. Copies of this despatch and of its enclosure are being sent to India, Egypt, Khartum (through Port Sudan), Jerusalem, Bagdad, Beirut (for Damascus), Aden, Singapore, Bushire, Koweit, Bahrein and Muskat.

I have, &c.  
S. R. JORDAN.

Enclosure in No. 197.

*Report for the Period October 30—November 27, 1925.*

(Secret.)

THE situation during the period under report has, in so far as the Hedjaz Government are concerned, become increasingly difficult and critical. What with the complete lack of money and the revolt of the fighting forces it would at first appear as if the Government were tottering before final and complete collapse. But the forces involved are so small in comparison with the publicity given to the Nejd-Hedjaz conflict throughout the Moslem world that apparently miraculous recoveries are possible, it being merely the question of the receipt of a few thousand pounds, and it would then at once appear possible for the war to be sustained indefinitely.

2. There is no doubt that Ibn Saud is concentrating forces in the vicinity of Jeddah with the declared intention of attacking the place. This attack was to have taken place some weeks back, but owing to the distractions around Medina it has been held up and is now promised for the end of the present moon. That is to say, about the 15th-20th December.

3. The Hedjaz Government have closed the Jeddah-Mecca road and nobody, with the exception of messengers or officials of foreign Powers, are allowed to pass through the lines. This precaution was necessary in order to prevent an exodus in mass of most of the residents, who wish to go to Mecca where living is infinitely cheaper than in Jeddah, and where also they would not be in constant fear of an attack and possible massacre.

4. In the Jeddah section actually there has been no hostile actions between the opposing forces. The aeroplanes daily bomb Wahabi camps situated in the Wadi Fatma, but from reports do little damage. On the 26th instant a 'plane was sent as far as Ta'if to ascertain the actual point of the concentration of some 8,000 troops which it is known that Ibn Saud is bringing from Nejd against Jeddah under his son Feisal.

5. Internally the situation could hardly be worse. On the 17th about 100 Bedouin soldiers representing the Yemen and Hedjaz tribes went to the King's palace and insisted on the release of one of their comrades who had been imprisoned for the murder of a slave the property of Sherif Nasir-bin-Ali, and also demanded their arrears of pay and overcoats and blankets for the winter. The King went down into the street and promised the men their money within forty-eight hours. The

soldier was released and an immediate issue of overcoats and blankets was also promised. During these proceedings Tahsin Pasha, the commander-in-chief, arrived but was not allowed by the soldiers to leave his motor car. When he greeted them with the usual greeting the soldiers replied telling him to hold his peace as they wanted none of his salaams. And when he endeavoured to leave the car one of the demonstrators slipped a clip of bullets into his rifle and prevented him. After the King's promises the soldiers expressed themselves as content and went off, firing into the air to show their joy. The whole affair was well organised, and only a few soldiers from each outpost came with the demonstrators, the remainder standing-to in their positions in case the Syrian and Palestinian troops should create trouble.

Seeing the success that attended the efforts of the Bedouin, the Palestinian and Syrian soldiers revolted two days later, and after a certain amount of indiscriminate firing all along the line as a sort of protest, the King went out and pacified them also with promises. Some days later the King called together the heads of the various parties and obtained fifteen days' grace for the fulfilment of his promises. This was allowed, and I now hear that last evening the King sent a number of sheep and rice and butter to the Bedouin troops, at the same time asking for a further five days' grace.

6. Discipline has entirely disappeared, and the trenches are manned more from an instinct of self-preservation than from patriotism. Ibn Saud hearing of this internecine strife has during the night had proclamations placed all along the line, promising the men perfect safety and repatriation to their homes if they will desert to his lines. This, if it becomes general information, will, I imagine, mean the desertion of large parties, but as the proclamations were gathered early and collected by several officers it is improbable that the information will become general for some days. It must be remembered that perhaps not one of the Bedouin soldiers who man the outposts can read or write. The King has in the last day or so been endeavouring to fulfil that part of his promise relating to overcoats and blankets by distributing two gunny bags to each Bedouin soldier.

7. The situation at Medina would appear to be even more critical. On the 3rd instant a certain Mustafa Abdullah, a prominent merchant of Medina and a Government contractor, arrived at Mecca with a letter signed by many of the residents requesting Ibn Saud to come himself to receive the submission of the garrison and town. Ibn Saud was, I am informed, at first inclined to consider this as a ruse to detract his attention from Jeddah, but finally, on receipt of further news, sent his son Muhammad with 500 chosen troops to Medina on the 9th instant. This party has now been before Medina for some days and only conflicting and contradictory rumours are available, but from the fact that the local Government are still in wireless communication with Abdul Majid, the commander of the garrison, it would appear as if the garrison has not yet capitulated, but may do so momentarily.

8. Hundreds of refugees have left Medina and are either living in the country round about and obtaining food from the desert tribes or are making their way to Mecca on foot. They are supposed to be mostly in a pitiable condition, and the Egyptian Government have, I understand, sent £800 for their relief.

9. Yambo at the commencement of the period under report was surrounded, and the Wahabi troops were entrenched right under the walls of the town, and the residents were, on account of flying bullets, mostly confined to their houses. Later, the townsfolk assisting, the military made a sortie and dislodged the entrenched soldiers, who retired to the foothills some distance inland. It was just prior to this action that the steamship "Keneh" endeavoured to enter Yambo, but was prevented from so doing by rifle-fire from the shore. One woman on board was slightly wounded by a flying splinter, and a sheep was killed by the rifle-fire. The "Keneh" proceeded to Jeddah, but since the Wahabis have been driven back the Khedivial boats are again calling regularly at that port. A German aviator and his observer were wounded just outside Yambo at the beginning of the month whilst endeavouring to bomb the trenches from a low altitude. Neither wound was serious.

10. The financial situation is equally depressing. The draft for £6,000, mentioned in my last report as having been received from Hussein, was finally met by the banks concerned, and the whole sum was paid to local merchants for provisions. Since then, as far as I can ascertain, no further moneys have been received, though there is a rumour of £4,000 arriving from Egypt in a few days, representing moneys raised on a mortgage of King Ali's properties in that country. No moneys have been paid to the soldiers during the period under report, and the troops are now seven months in arrears of pay. In some particular cases it is even more.

*General.*

11. During the period under report, the military authorities endeavoured to force the local Hadramis to join the army and man the trenches. On a complaint being made to me by a number of them I protested to the King, who regretted the error and promised to see that there would be no repetition of same. Since then, I have had no further complaints.

12. The dispute between Tawil and Ahmed Saggof, as mentioned in my last report, has now ended in the defeat of Saggof, who is leaving Jeddah in a few days. Tawil now, though nominally only Director of Customs, is practically dictator to the King. I believe that the situation has more or less been forced on King Ali by financial considerations, because Tawil, having been the Director of Customs for some years, has put aside certain economies during that period and has now promised to devote every penny to the sacred cause of the Hedjaz.

13. A certain Raza Bey Saban received a visa from this agency on the 27th October to proceed to Cyprus and later to Syria. He did not leave Jeddah until about the 15th November, and was appointed to the rank of pasha just prior to his departure. It is rumoured locally that he was rewarded with the rank of pasha on account of a memorandum he brought to Jeddah from Syria, which had been signed by most of the leading Druse sheiks requesting King Ali to accept the crown of the Druse Kingdom. I have been unable to get definite confirmation of this statement, but he must have done something to be appointed to the rank of pasha. He has, it is further rumoured, returned to Syria to make propaganda in favour of Ali's nomination to the throne, passing by Cyprus on his way in an endeavour to extract some money from Hussein for propaganda purposes.

14. A certain Zakki Bey of Bagdad has been appointed Finance Minister, and entered upon his duties recently.

15. The Dutch light cruiser "Java" arrived in Jeddah on the 7th of the month after calling at Rabigh, where the commander inspected the port and reported upon it in view of the pilgrimage. He is of the opinion that five or six ships only could lie at anchor, but that if buoys were placed and vessels moored fore and aft nearly double that number could be accommodated. I understand that the Dutch authorities are authorising the pilgrimage this year (pilgrim year), and that Rabigh will be the port of entry and exit unless the situation at Jeddah is cleared up before the arrival of the pilgrim ships.

16. The local agent of the Khedivial Mail Line informs me that the Turkish authorities have made arrangements with the Khedivial Line for the repatriation of 500 Turkish subjects from Hodeidah. Also, that the Italian Government have opened a hospital or dispensary at that port.

17. The Persian consul-general from Damascus who, with the Persian Minister from Cairo, formed a delegation to the Hedjaz and Nejd, has now arrived at Medina to inspect the tombs and ascertain the truth of the rumoured acts of vandalism on the part of the Wahabis. The Persian Minister returned to Cairo after visiting Mecca.

18. Sir Gilbert Clayton concluded the treaty with Ibn Saud and left for Port Sudan on H.M.S. "Clematis" on the 5th instant.

19. Mr. Philby disappeared from Jeddah on the night of the 11th November, and is supposed to have left in a dhow for Lith from whence he hopes to proceed to somewhere in the vicinity of Mecca to meet Ibn Saud.

20. Twenty-two slaves have been repatriated during the period under report.

S. R. JORDAN.

[E 7992/10/91]

No. 198.

*Mr. Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 22.)*

(No. 113.)

Sir,

*Jeddah, November 29, 1925.*  
I HAVE the honour to confirm my telegram of to-day's date, No. 166, stating that this morning a number of Palestinian and Syrian soldiers fully armed took refuge in the main mosque of Jeddah and refused to leave as a protest against being detained in the Hedjaz army against their will, and receiving neither pay, food nor clothing according to their respective contract stipulations.

2. As soon as it became general information the bazaars were closed and the King placed his own bodyguard, composed of armed slaves, and certain Arab troops at various vantage points around the mosque.

3. Fearing that the local authorities were going to attack the soldiers, who were protesting against their maltreatment in a peaceful manner, and thereby provoke disorder in the town, I consulted with my Italian colleague, who is temporarily charged with French interests, and we decided to protest against any offensive action being taken against the soldiers concerned, as we considered that as they had received nothing but promises for months past they had a legal right to protest against the behaviour of the Hedjaz Government in their respect.

4. We called upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs and His Majesty King Ali, and whilst recognising the right of the Hedjaz Government to take any defensive action possible to stop internal disorders, such as looting, &c., we formally protested against the employment of force against the soldiers of our respective mandated territories, as such would provoke further disorders in the town, and the soldiers had, we contended, a legitimate grievance.

5. We further offered, in so far as our attitude of strict neutrality permitted, to lend our assistance in the maintenance of order and the protection of life and property.

6. His Majesty expressed his gratefulness for our offer and promised faithfully that he would take no offensive action against the troops concerned, and further stated that the whole of the remaining Palestinian and Syrian troops in the Hedjaz were being repatriated within seven days, including those under discussion.

7. I venture to hope that you will approve the joint action taken, as in view of the two revolts reported in my telegram No. 163 of the 19th November and the general dissatisfaction of the troops and even the townsfolk themselves the temper of the people is very uncertain, and an error of judgment on the part of the local military authorities may lead to internal disorders of a serious nature with a consequent loss of life and property.

8. Seeing that this, the third revolt within fifteen days, may be considered to have reached a successful conclusion, it would appear quite probable that the Hedjaz and Yemen Arabs will consider it advisable to take similar action, and if they do the defences of Jeddah will be unmanned and the Wahabis free to walk in unopposed.

9. I shall not fail to keep you informed of any further events of interest as they may occur.

10. Copies of this despatch are being sent to India, Egypt and Palestine.  
I have, &c.  
S. R. JORDAN.

No. 199.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 22.)*

(No. 191.)

(Telegraphic.) R

*Jeddah, December 22, 1925.*

I PROCEEDED to Ibn Saud's camp with the head of the Provisional Government in Jeddah and commander-in-chief of forces yesterday. They officially surrendered, and I informed Ibn Saud that my work as intermediary was now finished. Ibn Saud replied before his full divan, thanking British Government for efforts put forward, and assured me in a most vehement and sincere manner that Nejd nation was bound to Great Britain by closest bonds of friendship and treaty relations, which they would always hold sacred, and that he would never have any relations with any other Power, big or small, as long as Great Britain respected her religion and honour.

Situation in Jeddah is quiet; disarmament is completed. Troops of Ibn Saud enter to-morrow (Wednesday).

(Sent to India, Cairo, Jerusalem, Bagdad and Singapore.)

No. 200.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Consul Smart (Damascus).*

(No. 36.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, December 23, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 41 of 21st December: Nejdian celebration of capture of Jeddah.

It would be preferable not to attend, and you will no doubt make suitable excuse for your absence.

I approve your refusal to tender advice.

No. 201.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Mr. Jordan (Jeddah).*

(No. 79.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Foreign Office, December 24, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 191 of 22nd December: Surrender of Jeddah.

Your tactful handling of situation merits my warm approval.

Ibn Saud's statement in second paragraph is welcome, and you are authorised to thank him for it.

No. 202

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 25.)*

(No. 192.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, December 24, 1925.*

IBN SAUD entered Jeddah yesterday (Wednesday) morning without incident. A reception attended by foreign representatives and notables was held. Situation perfectly quiet.

There would now appear to be no reason why pilgrimage should not take place as formerly.

(Sent to India, Cairo, Jerusalem, Bagdad, Aden, Khartum and Singapore.)

No. 203.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 29.)*

(No. 193.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, December 28, 1925.*

IBN SAUD wishes to appoint an official representative in Egypt, but first desires to ascertain His Majesty's Government's opinion in this respect.

Though he did not mention the fact, I imagine that he would like this representative to be assisted and advised by His Majesty's representative in Egypt as in Damascus.

(Sent to Cairo.)

No. 204.

*Acting Agent, Jeddah, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 29.)*

(No. 194.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Jeddah, December 28, 1925.*

IT is locally rumoured that Sir G. Clayton is proceeding on a mission to Yemen. Ibn Saud asks me whether this is a fact.

In view of friendly relations between His Majesty's Government and Ibn Saud, I suggest that he should be kept informed through this agency of trend of negotiations.

[E 8082/10/91]

No. 205.

*Acting Consul Jordan to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 29.)*

(No. 114.)

Sir,

*Jeddah, November 30, 1925.*

IN continuation of my letter No. 113 of the 29th November, referring to the revolt of the local Syrian and Palestinian troops, I have the honour to state that it would appear from information received after the despatch of my letter under reference, and which was drawn up hurriedly to catch the mail, that the situation on the 29th instant was much more serious than was at first believed.

2. It appears that on the afternoon and evening of the 28th November the whole of the forces defending Jeddah decided to combine and loot the town the following day. The King, hearing rumours to this effect at midnight on the 28th-29th, sent for the sheikhs of the Yemani and Hedjazi Arabs and begged them to go at once and endeavour to dissuade the troops from this action.

3. The sheikhs were apparently successful in their endeavours, but the Syrian and Palestinian soldiers nevertheless insisted upon obtaining some definite arrangement with the local authorities as to their payment and eventual repatriation, and so representatives of the various sections entered the town and proceeded to the mosque, where they intended to remain until granted satisfaction, the remainder of their comrades remaining at their posts in charge of the guns and machine guns to come to their assistance if they were maltreated or fired upon by the King's bodyguard and satellites.

4. Eventually, after protracted negotiations and the assurances of the King that they would receive their pay and be repatriated within seven days, the soldiers consented to leave the mosque and proceeded to the King's palace, where they, as representing the remainder of the Palestinian and Syrian forces, will be entertained as guests until their repatriation.

5. The above facts have been supplied to me by a responsible sheikh in charge of a large section of the forces and I have no reason to doubt their authenticity, and they would appear to more than justify the action taken by my Italian colleague and myself, as any offensive action against the representatives would have brought about common action on the part of the whole of the forces and led to the sacking of the town.

6. Except in so far as tribal custom admits a certain authority on the part of the responsible sheikhs, all discipline has disappeared, and the Syrian and Palestinian troops refuse to serve any longer with the Hedjaz forces.

7. The Yemani and Hedjazi troops, however, are content to go on fighting provided they are paid, and the whole question would appear to be one of money.

8. If Ali can obtain money, there is no reason why the defences of the town should not be maintained indefinitely, as, despite all his declarations on the subject, Ibn Saud seems reluctant to attack Jeddah, or, indeed, any of the other garrisons still holding out against him, in a decisive manner, preferring apparently to await the final, and perhaps just as satisfactory, results obtainable by internecine strife and siege conditions.

9. Copies of this despatch are being sent to India, Egypt and Palestine.  
I have, &c.

S. R. JORDAN, Vice-Consul.

*Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 30.)*

(No. 465.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram No. 327: Ibn Saud's request to appoint representative in Egypt.

It would be convenient for discussion of pilgrimage and cognate questions if Ibn Saud were officially represented in Egypt, and I see no objection on other grounds. It is desirable that his representative should look to us rather than elsewhere for advice.

Appointment depending presumably on recognition of new régime, I should be grateful for information if, when and in what terms His Majesty's Government recognise Ibn Saud's authority in the Hedjaz.

Egyptian Government appear anxious to conform to decision of His Majesty's Government.

(Sent to Jeddah.)

*Cairo, December 30, 1925.*

### CHAPTER III.—PALESTINE.

[E 4017/214/65]

No. 207.

*Mr. Sterling to Mr. Oliphant.—(Received July 8.)*

*United States Embassy, London,  
July 7, 1925.*

Dear Oliphant,

HEREWITH the memorandum concerning the question of the imposition upon American nationals of the increased Palestine import duties which have not received the assent of the United States Government. You will recollect that, at our last meeting, I spoke of a recent instruction from my Government upon this subject: in particular, the imposition of the increased duties affecting a shipment of matches into Palestine by an American citizen, Mr. Elimelech Sachs. The enclosed memorandum is a summary of that instruction.

Yours, &c.  
F. A. STERLING.

Enclosure in No. 207.

#### Memorandum.

THE American Embassy refers to the memorandum, dated the 4th May, 1925, and handed to the Foreign Office, concerning the question of the jurisdiction of the Palestinian authorities over United States citizens pending the entrance into force of the Palestine Mandate Convention signed on the 3rd December, 1924, between the United States and Great Britain, and particularly to the last paragraph of that memorandum which reserves for further discussion the question of the imposition upon American nationals of the increased Palestine import duties which have not received the assent of the United States Government.

The imposition of the increased import duties referred to in this reservation was the subject of a general protest made by the American consul at Jerusalem upon the occasion of the announcement of the increased duties. The only specific case in which a formal protest has been made to the Palestine Government is, however, that of Elimelech Sachs, which was the subject of note dated the 16th September, 1924, addressed by the American Ambassador to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. It is reported by the American consul at Jerusalem that apparently no objection has been raised by other American importers in Palestine to the payment of the increased duties affecting their importations. The duties affecting such importations are understood to have been increased by only 3 per cent. *ad valorem*, whereas the increase affecting the importation of matches by Mr. Sachs was approximately 2,000 per cent.

The pertinent facts in the case of Mr. Sachs are as follows:—

"On the 15th August, 1924, there was published in the "Official Gazette" of the Palestine Government the text of an ordinance, entitled "The Customs Duties Amendment Ordinance, 1924," providing for certain changes in the Palestine tariff. One of the changes thus set forth increased the duty on matches from 11 per cent. *ad valorem* to P.T. 20 per gross boxes, not exceeding 10,000 matches, an increase approximately from P.T. 75 to P.T. 1,000 per shipping case of matches. The collection of duties under this ordinance was begun on the 16th August, Sometime previous to the promulgation of this ordinance (it is stated "in July"). Mr. Elimelech Sachs, an American citizen, had ordered a quantity (350 shipping cases or 17,500 gross boxes) of matches. His shipment arrived in Palestine on the 18th August, and duty was assessed thereon in the amount of £E. 3,500 under the new tariff instead of £E. 180 under the old tariff. The difference, £E. 3,320, was equivalent to slightly over 15,000 dollars at the then prevailing rate of exchange. Mr. Sachs declined to pay the increased duty, and protested to the consul at Jerusalem. The consul addressed a formal protest to the Palestine Government, and informed the Department of State, which, through the Embassy at London, brought the matter to the attention of the British Foreign Office. On

the 10th December the Foreign Office enquired through the Embassy whether, in view of the signature of the Palestine Mandate Convention, it was desired to pursue further, amongst others, this matter.

In reply, the Embassy, under instructions from the Department of State, informed the Foreign Office, under date of the 19th December, in part:—

"The American Government's position regarding the indispensability of its assent to any dues or taxes to be imposed upon Americans in Palestine prior to the coming into effect of the Mandate Convention has not been changed by the signature of that convention. Meanwhile, however, my Government would be disposed to give favourable consideration to any reasonable request of the mandatory Power that the United States assent to the collection of increased dues or taxes from Americans in Palestine as from the date of the communication of its assent to the British Government. A similar procedure was followed with respect to a contemplated increase of customs dues in Syria shortly after the signature of the Syrian Mandate Convention between the United States and France."

Apparently no further action has been taken in this matter by the British Foreign Office, other than in its informal enquiry of the 6th March, 1925, through the Embassy, whether the United States Government was prepared to proceed to an exchange of ratifications of the Palestine Mandate Convention.

From a report dated the 4th March, 1925, from the American consul at Jerusalem it would appear that, pending a decision as to the admissibility of this consignment under the previously prevailing duty, it has been refused entry except upon payment of the increased duty, and has been held in the customs bonded warehouse at the port of Jaffa, where it has become subject to considerable storage charges. It appears to be clearly established that this shipment was such as might reasonably have been made to Mr. Sachs in the normal course of his dealings in matches, and that his order therefore was not placed with any knowledge of or in anticipation of the subsequent increase in the Palestine import duty as affecting this commodity. Nor does there appear to be any doubt that, should he now be required to enter this shipment at the new rate of duty, he would sustain a considerable actual pecuniary loss. From a further report from the consul at Jerusalem, dated the 17th June, 1925, it appears that such actual loss "would be £E. 1,400, besides accrued interest and storage charges."

It will be obvious to the British Government that, under the circumstances, Mr. Sachs was entitled to have his shipment of matches enter at the former rate of duty, which would have amounted to £E. 180, instead of at the new rate which amounted to £E. 3,500. It is realised, however, that this would have allowed him a considerable advantage over competitors paying the new rate of duty by permitting him to undersell his competitors and still obtain a very large percentage of profit. While the United States Government does not desire to take advantage of the situation by insisting, as it might well do, that the matches should be entered at the duty obtaining at the time the purchase was made, it does consider that it can rightfully support the claim of Mr. Sachs against loss. It has been suggested that this might be accomplished were the Palestine authorities, who are now detaining Mr. Sachs's matches, to take over the shipment *in toto* and pay to him an amount which would reimburse him for his outlay, and allow a reasonable profit, or were they to release the goods to him under such circumstances as will make such result possible. Should this second course be followed, it would seem fair that (1) accrued storage dues on the shipment of matches to Mr. Sachs should be remitted, (2) he should be indemnified for the difference between the market value in Palestine of the shipment and its original cost plus the present customs duty thereon, (3) he should be relieved of any loss of accrued interest he may have sustained, and (4) he should receive an amount equal to such reasonable profit as might have accrued on the sale of this shipment had the new duty not been put into effect.

In this connection it should be pointed out that the Department of State, in again raising this question at this time, does not desire in any way to place any unnecessary difficulties in the way of the coming into effect of the convention at the earliest possible moment, and that it is not disposed to make an issue of the omission of the British Government to seek and obtain the assent of the United States Government to the increase of the Palestine tariff affecting the shipment of Mr. Sachs. It is, however, the Department's opinion, an opinion in which it is believed the British Government will

readily concur, that, in the circumstances of the case of Mr. Sachs, adequate provision should be made to obviate the possibility of his sustaining any loss as a result of the application to his shipment of matches of the increased tariff of the 15th August, 1925.

*United States Embassy, London,  
July 3, 1925.*

[E 4242/4242/65]

No. 208.

*Mr. Dormer to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 20.)*

(No. 96.)  
Sir,

*British Legation to the Holy See, Rome,  
July 17, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to private information given me, Mgr. Barlassina, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, has been creating fresh difficulties in Palestine for the Holy See among the different religious communities and rites, and that the Pope has finally decided to end such a situation. I understand that Mgr. Barlassina has been acting as if he were the official representative of the Holy See, whereas in reality he is merely an ordinary, with no more representative character than any other bishop. A "permanent Apostolic visitor" is to be sent out who will be the Pope's official representative; and, on his arrival, Mgr. Barlassina will have to confine himself to his regular episcopal functions. Mgr. Kean is not likely to be given the appointment, as he is under the authority of the Patriarch, and I believe the choice will fall on Father Paschal Robinson. It is probable that the Apostolic visitor will prepare the way for the appointment of an Apostolic delegate. Mgr. Barlassina is expected in Rome in a week's time. I will not fail to report further as soon as I am in a position to do so.

I have, &c.  
C. DORMER.

[E 4572/4242/65]

No. 209.

*Mr. Dormer to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 5.)*

(No. 102. Confidential.)  
Sir,

*British Legation to the Holy See, Rome,  
July 29, 1925.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 96 of the 17th instant, I have the honour to report that the appointment of Apostolic Visitor to Palestine has now been given to Father Paschal Robinson. In this capacity he will, as already reported, be the official representative of the Pope. He will have no easy task to perform in defining and co-ordinating the relations between the Latins and members of the Oriental rites, as also between the different rites themselves, e.g., between the Custodia and the Latin Patriarchate, but if anyone is likely to succeed it is Father Robinson. Though a Franciscan himself, he enjoys the confidence, I am told, of all parties, and, what is equally important, his prestige in Rome stands unrivalled in all that pertains to Palestine. There was a time when he was regarded by propaganda as seeing things too much from a one-sided standpoint, "troppo inglese" Cardinal van Rossum once called him, but nevertheless the confidence reposed in his judgment has grown and is now shared by the cardinal himself, who lately appointed him Consultor of the Congregation of Propaganda.

2. If his absence is felt in Rome his presence in Palestine should make for smoother relations all round, especially now that Mgr. Kean appears to have succeeded in restoring, on the Patriarch's side, a more friendly attitude towards the British authorities.

3. I understand that Father Robinson will not be leaving until the end of August, and in the meanwhile Mgr. Barlassina is expected shortly to be arriving in Rome, when he will be informed of the decisions taken. Incidentally, I should add that Father Robinson's jurisdiction will extend to Cyprus.

I have, &c.  
C. DORMER.

[E 6224/4242/65]

No. 210.

*Sir Odo Russell to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 13.)*

(No. 132. Confidential.)

*British Legation to the Holy See, Rome,  
October 5, 1925.*

WITH reference to Mr. Dormer's despatch No. 102 of the 29th July, I have the honour to report that Father Paschal Robinson called at the Legation this morning to take farewell before proceeding to Jerusalem to assume his appointment as Apostolic Visitor to Palestine. The reverend father is to leave Rome on Wednesday next. With the arrival of Father Paschal Robinson as representative of the Pope in the Holy Land, many of the dissensions which have agitated rival factions in the past will, I venture to predict, be smoothed over, as everyone, from the High Commissioner and the Patriarch downwards, will be able to profit by the tact, knowledge and authority of this holy man. This prediction will be readily confirmed, I feel confident, by those officials in your department who are personally acquainted with Father Robinson and his work. In Rome he has the ear of the highest, and the reliable information he has always been ready to communicate to the Legation has therefore at all times been of great value. In the intricate problems of the Holy Places, in their past history as well as in post-war negotiations for a settlement, he can perhaps be called the leading expert. As a Franciscan he will stand well with the Custodia, while the good relations he has personally always maintained with Mgr. Barlassina will no doubt serve to promote friendlier intercourse between the Patriarchate and the representatives of his Order. Father Robinson tells me that he has declined a pressing invitation to take up his abode in the Patriarchate in order to preserve more effectively the position of impartiality which his office of Apostolic Visitor demands, and that he will in the first instance alight at an hotel until a suitable residence can be found.

2. In the course of a long audience he had yesterday with the Pope to receive his final instructions, His Holiness charged him with friendly messages to the High Commissioner, expressing at the same time the hope that he would be as successful a Governor of Palestine as he was of Malta. "I cannot wish him anything better," added His Holiness, "as his term of office at Malta was, from our point of view, perfect."

I have, &c.  
ODO RUSSELL.

[E 4182/214/65]

No. 211.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Houghton.*

Your Excellency,

*Foreign Office, October 13, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you that His Majesty's Government have considered sympathetically the various questions dealt with in your Excellency's note of the 19th December, 1924, and memoranda of the 4th May and the 3rd July last, relative to the position of United States citizens in Palestine prior to and pending the entry into force of the Anglo-American Palestine Mandate Convention of the 3rd December, 1924. His Majesty's Government understand that the United States Government desire to reach a friendly settlement of the outstanding cases that have arisen in connection with this subject before the convention concerned is actually brought into force by the formal exchange of the ratifications which have already taken place. As from the date of this exchange the position will, of course, be fully regularised, and no further cases of this type can arise. It is therefore desirable from every point of view that the exchange of ratifications should take place with the least possible delay.

2. The particular cases of which a settlement is desired fall into two main categories—administrative and legal. As regards the former, His Majesty's Government fully understand the position taken up by the Government of the United States, that their prior assent is indispensable to the imposition of any dues or taxes upon United States citizens in Palestine pending the entry into force of the convention. His Majesty's Government realise, moreover, that this position has not been changed by the mere signature of the convention. It appears, however,

that only one case in this category—that of Mr. Sachs—has formed the subject of protest by the United States authorities. I understand from your memorandum of the 3rd July last that the views of your Government in this matter could be satisfactorily met by the remittance of the accrued storage dues on the shipment of matches to Mr. Sachs; by his indemnification for the difference between the market value in Palestine of the shipment and its original cost, together with the present customs duty thereon; by Mr. Sachs being relieved of any loss of accrued interest which he may have sustained as a result of the action of the Palestine authorities in this matter; and by his receiving an amount equal to such reasonable profit as might have accrued on the sale of this shipment had the new duty not been put into effect. His Majesty's Government, while adhering to their own views in regard to the questions of principle involved, which, as you are aware, are in conflict with those held by your Government, are willing to undertake, on behalf of the Palestine Government, that the steps suggested above as regards the particular case of Mr. Sachs' shipment of matches will be taken by the Palestine Government immediately after the entry into force of the convention. As regards the question of principle, His Majesty's Government consider now that adequate provision has been made for the future, the situation will be adequately met if each Government takes formal note of the view held by the other, while at the same time expressing its regret that it is unable on grounds of principle to conform thereto.

3. With regard to the Skora case and other cases involving the question of jurisdiction over American citizens prior to the entry into force of the Palestine Mandate Convention, His Majesty's Government notice with satisfaction that the United States Government have no objection to the retrial by the Palestinian courts of the cases concerned, but regret that it is not possible for them to take the measures suggested in your notes under reply. Such measures would involve *ex post facto* legislation of the kind which is as contrary to British as to United States constitutional practice. Here, again, it appears that the only solution is that suggested above; that is, for each Government to take formal note of the view held by the other, while expressing its regret that it is unable on principle to conform to it.

4. If there is any civil case, however, in which a United States citizen has refused to appear in the Palestinian courts, relying upon his rights under the former capitulatory system, and where he alleges that he had a good defence and that, had he appeared, the judgment would therefore not have been entered against him, the Palestine Government will be prepared to request the Chief Justice, or some other responsible officer, to investigate the case. Should this officer, as a result of his investigations, form the opinion that the defence, which would have been put forward by the American citizen had he appeared, would have succeeded, His Majesty's Government will undertake that the Palestine Government will offer fair compensation to the United States citizen concerned as an act of diplomatic courtesy not affecting the question of principle involved.

5. It does not appear to His Majesty's Government that any useful purpose would be served by a further discussion of the complicated legal position arising out of the abolition of the capitulations prior to the entry into force of the convention. It is apparent that the views held by His Majesty's Government, as mandatories for Palestine, and those held by the United States Government on this matter cannot be reconciled, and, in view of the conclusion of the Mandate Convention, further attempts to reconcile these views appear unnecessary. His Majesty's Government have, however, no desire to obtain from the Government of the United States any formal abandonment of the capitulatory rights of United States citizens in Palestine prior to the entry into force of the convention. On the contrary, they readily take formal note of the fact that the claim to these rights was not abandoned by the United States Government. At the same time, they feel convinced that the United States Government will equally appreciate the position of His Majesty's Government, and will, as a friendly act, refrain from pressing them to recede therefrom.

I have, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[E 7038/214/65]

No. 212.

*Mr. Houghton to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 16.)**United States Embassy,**London, November 14, 1925.*

Sir,  
I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 13th October, 1925, in reply to the Embassy's note of the 19th December, 1924, and memoranda of the 4th May and the 3rd July last, relative to the position of American nationals in Palestine prior to the entering into force of the Palestine Mandate Convention signed the 3rd December, 1924.

In reply, I am directed to inform you of the satisfaction with which my Government has noted the sympathetic consideration which has been accorded the communications which I had the honour to address to you on this subject, with a view to finding a mutually satisfactory basis for the settlement of the questions at issue. I take pleasure in informing you that my Government has authorised me to convey to you its acquiescence in the suggestion that as regards the questions of principle which have arisen with respect to the status of the capitulatory rights of American citizens in the mandated territory of Palestine pending the coming into force of the convention each Government should take note of the view held by the other. Further consideration of this question is rendered unnecessary, as far as Palestine is concerned, in view of the practical steps which His Majesty's Government, on behalf of the Palestine Government, has indicated its readiness to take in the individual cases which the Embassy has had the honour to bring to your attention. Upon the exchange of ratifications of the convention the situation will be automatically regularised.

In conclusion, I am directed by my Government to inform you that, as a result of the present exchange of notes, I shall be pleased, at your convenience, to proceed to the ratifications of the Palestine Mandate Convention of the 3rd December, 1924.

I have, &c.  
(For the Ambassador),

RAY ATHERTON,  
*First Secretary of Embassy.*

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**CHAPTER IV.—SYRIA.**

[E 3728/362/65]

No. 213.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).*

(No. 2257.)

My Lord,

*Foreign Office, July 1, 1925.*

WITH reference to your despatch No. 1093 of the 8th May and previous correspondence regarding the north-eastern section of Syria which separates Turkey from Irak, I transmit to your Lordship the accompanying copy of a telegram from His Majesty's High Commissioner for Irak.

2. I realise that it is a matter of some delicacy to approach the French Government again on this subject in view of the categorical assurances given to you to the effect that they have no intention of allowing the Turks to penetrate into this territory or of entering into any agreement for such a purpose. I place full reliance on these assurances, and have no desire to question their sincerity. On the other hand, the Quai d'Orsay have apparently not yet received from the French High Commissioner in Syria the information which they undertook to obtain from him. They have themselves admitted that Turkish patrols may exist in this area, and it appears from the telegram enclosed herein that the Turks have in fact established posts in a territory which the French Government regard as unquestionably French.

3. I shall therefore be glad if you will communicate the substance of Sir H. Dobbs's telegram confidentially to the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with an explanation in the sense of the preceding paragraph of this despatch. You should assure them that His Majesty's Government fully realise the practical difficulties which must beset the French authorities in exercising effective control over this territory, and express the earnest hope that in the present Franco-Turkish negotiations for the rectification of the Syrian frontier no retrocession of Syrian territory will be made, whereby effective French control over the regions adjoining Irak would be rendered still more difficult than it now is.

I am, &amp;c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

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Enclosure in No. 213.*High Commissioner, Irak, to Colonial Office.*

(No. 292.)

(Telegraphic.)

June 16, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 228.

According to the latest reliable information, the following are the Turkish posts in Syrian wedge, with their approximate strength:—(Reference quarter million provisional sheet J-38 M) 1 officer, 30 men at Girikara; 7 at Haiaki; 8 at Segirka; 1 non-commissioned officer, 10 men at Kharab Rashid; 1 non-commissioned officer, 10 men at Hanaiwiyaah (which is 5 miles south-west of Girikara); 1 non-commissioned officer, 10 men at Piliss (which is 4 miles south of Kharab Rashid); 4 or 5 men at Mamashur (which is 3 miles north of Girikara).

[E 4005/357/89]

No. 214.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 7.)*

(No. 107.)

Sir,

*Damascus, Syria, June 23, 1925.*

WITH reference to the last paragraph of my despatch No. 100 of the 16th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of a facsimile of the famous Druze "Charter of Independence."

The Druze chiefs have returned to Damascus from Beirut, where General Sarrail refused to receive them. Apparently the chiefs were prepared to waive their right to a native Governor, provided the French Governor were someone other than

Captain Carbillot. They profess to be satisfied with the Acting Governor, Captain Renault, who was a subordinate in the Bureau de Renseignements here. He is a young man, reputed to be enlightened and to be addicted to the sympathetic study of local customs. He is said to have composed a work on the Beduins.

I have the honour to enclose herewith a translation of a letter of protest addressed to the general by the Druze chiefs after their return to Damascus and published in the Damascus newspaper "Alif Ba."<sup>\*</sup>

It would seem that French colonial mentality is unable to adapt itself to the peculiar circumstances of the Jebel Druze. For centuries the Druze community has lived in a state of internal independence under the suzerainty of the Power holding Syria. With a little tact and management, it should not be difficult for France, which has more effective means of repression than those possessed by former overlords, to hold the mountain securely without excessive interference in the internal arrangements of this peculiar community. For instance, there would seem no reason why France should not respect the Charter of Independence and tolerate a native Governor, suitably guided by French advisers, who, as elsewhere in French mandated territory, would exercise the real power. The persistence of the mandatory authorities in imposing a French Governor, against their own written engagement, appears to be unnecessarily provocative and without any practical advantage to France. The result of this attitude appears to be that the mountain is being driven into the arms of Syrian nationalism and unity, from which the Druzes, if their local independence were respected, would gladly hold aloof.

The deputation to M. Brunet and the general included or represented the leading chiefs of the Attrache and Halabi families, between whom, it is asserted, concord has been re-established, in spite of French efforts to create division (see my despatch No. 96 of the 16th June, 1924).

The Druze chiefs have expressed very uncomplimentary opinions regarding General Sarrail, whom they appear to regard as being in his dotage.

By exasperating the Druzes, France appears to be doing her best to stir up a hornets' nest in a locality where disorder would be inconvenient both to herself and to our neighbouring mandatory territory of Transjordania.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

Enclosure in No. 214.

(Translation.)

#### *The Basic Organisation of the Government of the Jebel Druze.*

##### ARTICLE 1.

IN the Jebel Druze of the Hauran a native Government is formed, widely independent in its administration, under the French mandate. As to the frontiers of this new Government, they will be defined by a commission, and will then have to be confirmed by the mandatory Power.

##### ARTICLE 2.

This Government will be a native one and its employees will be chosen from the natives of the country. The manner of its administration shall be in accordance with local customs. The mandatory Power will provide French advisers to the native Government for its guidance in legal and administrative matters. These advisers will be under the French delegate at Damascus. The name of this Government will be reserved till it is agreed upon with the High Commissioner.

##### ARTICLE 3.

A native Governor will be at the head of the Government, and his election will be by the lawful representatives of the nation for a period of four years, in accordance with a special law to be enacted hereafter. His election will not be final until after the approval of the mandatory Power.

\* Not printed.

##### ARTICLE 4.

Two Assemblies will assist the Governor in his work. The first will be called the "Government Council," and the second the "Administrative Commission." The legal representatives of the nation will elect the Government Council for a period of three years, in accordance with a special law which will be enacted hereafter. This council will meet once a year to examine the Government budget and to approve the accounts of the previous year. It will make proposals regarding public affairs, such as public works, health, public assistance, education, &c. But the Administrative Commission will sit permanently, and its members will be composed of persons appointed by the Governor and delegates elected by the Government Council.

##### ARTICLE 5.

A special law will be enacted to define the duties of the Governor and his powers and the powers of the Government Council and those of the Administrative Commission, and how these bodies should be formed. A special committee will be entrusted with the drawing up of this law, which will not be executory till after the approval of the mandatory Power.

##### ARTICLE 6.

The mandatory Power alone will give the Jebel Druze any technical, financial, economic and military assistance which it may need.

##### ARTICLE 7.

The mandatory Power undertakes to exempt the inhabitants of Jebel Druze from compulsory military service. As to the gendarmerie and police, which are needed for the maintenance of public security, they will be established on a basis of voluntary service. The inhabitants of the Jebel will be allowed to keep their arms within the frontiers of the Druze Government, but outside those frontiers the above-mentioned inhabitants must obey the regulations in force for carrying arms.

##### ARTICLE 8.

The mandatory Power alone is entrusted with the interests of the Druze Government and its representation abroad. But within the French zone the mandatory Power will accept representatives of the Mountain Government for economic affairs.

##### ARTICLE 9.

The mandatory Power undertakes not to compel the Government of the Druze Mountain to enter into the Syrian Unity which is likely to occur hereafter between the Syrian countries, except in what concerns economic questions which are of common interest to both the Druze Government and other Syrian regions.

##### ARTICLE 10.

The sources of revenue for the budget of the Druze Mountain are the following:—

1. The different taxes imposed by the Government Council.
2. The taxes imposed on mines which will probably be discovered in the lands of this Government.
3. The revenues of the parts of the "Saniyyeh Lands" which were properties of the former Ottoman Government, and which will probably be included in the zone of the new Government of the Druze Mountain. No tithes will be paid within the limits of this Government.

##### ARTICLE 11.

The budget of the Government of Jebel Druze does not become executory until after the approval of the French High Commissioner in Syria.

##### ARTICLE 12.

No customs duties will be imposed between the Government of Jebel Druze and the Government of the Damascus region. But the Druze Government will have the right to get its share of the Syrian customs revenues in the event of their being divided between the other Syrian regions.

## ARTICLE 13.

The Government Council can demand the dismissal of the Governor from the mandatory Power in circumstances to be mentioned in the special law relating to the powers and duties of the said Governor. The mandatory Power will take a decision in this respect after having consulted the religious chiefs.

## ARTICLE 14.

The mandatory Power, the Government Council and the Administrative Commission will not in any way interfere in religious affairs. The civil authority has no right to dismiss or set aside religious chiefs.

## ARTICLE 15.

The mandatory Power and the local Government of the Jebel undertake to support the rights of the minorities within the boundaries of the Mountain Government.

Signed and sealed by :

FAKHR-UD-DIN SHU'RANI.  
MASOUD GHANEM.  
MAZYAD SHALFIN.  
NAYEF ABU FAKHR.  
TOFIK ABU ASSAF.  
OKLEH KUTAMI.  
KUFTAN AZZAM.  
FADL-ALLAH HUNEIDEH.  
NEJEM HASSAN ATTRACHE.  
NESSIB-BIN-MOHAMMED ATTRACHE.  
SELIM-BIN-MOHAMMED ATTRACHE.  
NASIB-EL-HUSSEIN.  
HASSAN ABU FAKHR.  
FAKHRI SHALFIN.  
HASSAN [?].  
DAKHL-ALLAH ABU FAKHR.

I agree and confirm the above in my name  
and in the name of the Religious Chiefs.

MOHAMMED ABU FAKHR.

*Religious Chief.*

Seal of French High Commissioner :

Approuvé :

(*Par intérim*),

ROBERT DE CAIX.

Le 4 mars 1921.

[E 4137/362/65]

No. 215.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 15.)*

(No. 1570.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, dated the 11th July, respecting Turkish military posts in North-East Syria.

Paris, July 14, 1925.

Enclosure in No. 215.

*M. Briand to the Marquess of Crewe*

M. l'Ambassadeur,

*Paris, le 11 juillet 1925.*

PAR sa lettre du 2 de ce mois, votre Excellence a bien voulu, sur les instructions du principal Secrétaire d'Etat de Sa Majesté pour les Affaires étrangères, attirer mon attention sur un rapport télégraphique du Haut-Commissaire britannique en Irak aux termes duquel certains postes turcs seraient établis dans la région nord-est du territoire syrien.

Vous m'avez rappelé en même temps qu'une conversation avait eu lieu, le 12 mars dernier, entre le chef du service compétent du Ministère des Affaires étrangères et un membre de votre Ambassade, au cours de laquelle ce dernier exposa les préoccupations que causait au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté la présence possible de troupes turques dans cette région. Le chef du service en question proposa alors d'écrire au Haut-Commissaire de la République à Beyrouth pour demander des informations sur la situation dans cette région. Il fit en même temps remarquer, en se référant à la déclaration faite par le Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, le 23 janvier, à la Chambre des Députés, que le Gouvernement français n'avait nulle intention de céder à la Turquie une partie quelconque du territoire syrien.

Vous m'exprimez, d'autre part, le désir d'être mis au courant des informations qui avaient pu être reçues de Beyrouth à ce sujet. Vous avez ajouté que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté, comprenant les difficultés pratiques que devaient éprouver les autorités françaises pour exercer leur contrôle sur les régions du nord-est de la Syrie voisines de la Turquie, se fiait pleinement aux assurances données par le Gouvernement français, à savoir qu'il n'avait nulle intention de laisser les Turcs s'installer sur ces territoires ni de conclure avec eux un arrangement dans ce sens.

Vous me faisiez connaître enfin que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté m'exprimait l'espérance qu'au cours des négociations prochaines entre la France et la Turquie pour la délimitation de la frontière syro-turque, il ne serait fait dans cette région aucune rétrocession de territoire syrien.

J'ai l'honneur d'exprimer à votre Excellence mes remerciements pour les informations qu'elle a bien voulu me faire parvenir. Une collaboration cordiale et confiante entre les Etats placés sous le mandat de l'Angleterre et de la France dans le Levant ne peut que correspondre entièrement aux vœux du Gouvernement de la République.

La non-détermination du tracé exact de la frontière entre la Syrie et la Turquie est, en effet, une cause de difficultés pour les autorités françaises de Syrie. Il n'a pas dépendu du Gouvernement français que cette frontière ne fut déjà délimitée. Dès 1922, conformément à l'article 8 de l'Accord d'Angora, une commission de délimitation franco-turque fut constituée, mais le Gouvernement turc refusa de ratifier l'accord où avaient été constatés ses travaux. Ce n'est qu'en 1924 que le représentant français à Angora obtint d'Ismet Pacha la reconstitution de cette commission, qui doit commencer à très bref délai des opérations sur le terrain.

En ce qui concerne particulièrement la section Nissibine-Djezireh-ibn-Omar, votre Excellence sait qu'aux termes de l'article 8 de l'Accord d'Angora, la frontière doit suivre la "vieille route" jusqu'à Djezireh-ibn-Omar, où elle rejoindra le Tigre. Quoiqu'il semble qu'aucun doute ne soit possible quant à l'interprétation d'une formule aussi claire, le Gouvernement turc l'a contestée et prétend que le terme de "vieille route" doit s'appliquer à une voie située sensiblement plus au sud, partant en effet de Nissibine, mais qui se perd au sud dans les sables au passage de la rivière Safanchai.

Quelque sûr qu'il fût de son bon droit, le Gouvernement français n'a pas voulu, avant qu'une délimitation ait fixé la frontière, intervenir militairement dans la région contestée pour y affirmer son autorité. Il a considéré, en effet, que des opérations militaires ne pourraient aboutir qu'à porter le trouble parmi les tribus qui attendent tranquillement d'être fixées sur leur sort.

Le Gouvernement français n'en est pas moins résolu à maintenir son point de vue, au cours des négociations qui vont s'ouvrir pour la délimitation de la frontière syro-turque. S'il peut être amené, dans la partie comprise entre la mer et Nissibine, à consentir sur le terrain de légères rectifications de frontière qui se justifieraient par des considérations pratiques, il n'en est pas de même dans la partie entre Nissibine et Djezireh, puisque d'après le traité la frontière suit la vieille route. En toute hypothèse, le Gouvernement de la République n'a pas l'intention de rétrocéder à la Turquie une

portion de quelque importance du territoire syrien. Il estime, d'ailleurs, qu'aux termes du mandat qui constitue la base légale de l'autorité de la France en Syrie, il ne serait pas en droit de le faire sans le double assentiment de la Société des Nations et des populations syriennes.

ARISTIDE BRIAND.

[E 4210/357/89]

No. 216.

*Consul-General Satow to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 20.)*

(No. 92.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that the first degree elections for the new Representative Council of the Great Lebanon, which were held on the 28th June and the two following days, appear from all accounts to have been conducted in a most scandalous fashion.

2. Bribery and corruption were rampant and unashamed. Beirut in this respect deserves particularly dishonourable mention, and Zahleh, on the edge of the Bekaa Plain, comes in a good second. The buying of votes was conducted as a regular business through brokers, who, while presumably paid by the candidates, also took a contribution from the voters. As a typical instance, I would cite the case of an Armenian carpenter who sold his vote for £S. 3, of which he paid £S. 1 to the broker. The Armenians are getting all the blame, and beyond doubt they, having no interest in the country or the candidates and a keen eye to the main chance, welcomed the opportunity of making easy money. But the Armenians were not the only ones, and money also passed into Lebanese hands.

3. Apart from this scandal, there are widespread complaints as to misconduct on the part of Government officials and supervising officers, who are accused of general obstruction, destruction of voting papers handed in by persons known to belong to the Opposition, insertion in the urns of papers signed by imaginary persons in favour of Government candidates and manipulation of the voting hours to keep out persons believed to be against the Government. Some of the complaints are presumably exaggerated, but, taking things as a whole, there is no doubt that there is much truth in the charges. Indeed, while the Opposition papers are full of them, those reckoned as Government organs seem to have but little to say, and even the Government of the Great Lebanon, which is usually fertile in communiqués and has prior to the date of the elections published several notices affirming its entire neutrality, has only thought fit to warn malcontents against public demonstrations and disorders, and to point out that any complaints in respect of alleged election irregularities must be submitted to the Council of State.

4. I am not in a position to say whether this body, which has not long been in existence, is really organised so as to be able to deal speedily with matters before it, but, in view of the number of complaints, it is obvious that it cannot deal with them all before the 12th July, which is the date fixed for the second degree elections.

5. A curious incident occurred at Souk-el-Gharb, near which village General Sarrail has taken a house for the summer. There a number of persons belonging to the Opposition, or so-called People's party, being angered by the behaviour of the supervising officer, who was alleged to be reading each voting paper handed in and if not satisfied inviting the voter to amend his choice, sent up a deputation to complain to the High Commissioner. The latter on hearing their complaint impulsively said that he would go with them to the voting booth, and actually started on his way. But on second thoughts he realised that his action was not fitting, and he turned back, telling the deputation to put their complaint in writing. Two subsequent deputations called on him later with other complaints, and were recommended to petition the Government.

6. Apart from declaring null and void practically all the first degree elections and postponing the date for those of the second degree, which would be an open confession of failure, there does not seem much for the Government to do, and probably it will do nothing.

7. In the Lebanon, when the Government is mentioned the Governor is as a rule really meant. M. Cayla is therefore credited with the responsibility for the various alleged scandals and abuses. He is reputed to be an able administrator, but he does

not seem to be enough of a diplomat to cope with the Lebanese and their ways. With General Sarrail he is trying to break the influence of the clergy, which has long been excessive and abusive, but his methods are somewhat heavy-handed and have provoked much of the present bother. However, he seems to wish to be named permanently Governor of the Lebanon, and the chances are that he will attain his object. There is no accounting for tastes.

I have, &c.

H. E. SATOW.

[E 4310/357/89]

No. 217.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 22.)*

(No. 116.)

Sir,

*Damascus, Syria, July 10, 1925.*

WITH reference to correspondence ending with my despatch No. 107 of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honour to report that a fortnight ago another Druze delegation appeared in Damascus, and asked for the retention of Captain Carbillot as Governor of the mountain. This second delegation was not nearly as representative as the first. The French High Commissioner's refusal to receive the first delegation no doubt encouraged some persons to come forward as the partisans of a Governor who, if the general's attitude were to be taken seriously, seemed likely to return with rewards for his supporters and chastisement for his adversaries.

A few days later the anti-Carbillot Druzes made a demonstration at Sodeida, the capital of the mountain, in front of the serai, where the Representative Council was then sitting. A riot ensued, the details of which, according to the accounts received by me, are as follows:—

One of Carbillot's supporters, Faris Bey Attrache, a member of the council, happened to arrive before the serai, and wished to enter to take part in the council's deliberations. He was badly handled by the demonstrators and had to take refuge in a neighbouring shop. French and native officers and officials, with gendarmerie, appeared on the scene with a view to calming the excitement, but were attacked by stones. One of the crowd, Hussein Murshid Ridwan, even fired several shots at the French adviser of gendarmerie, Lieutenant Morel, fortunately missing him, but wounding a gendarme in the hand. The lieutenant, however, received several blows from stones and sticks, and had to make good his escape.

French troops were then brought out and occupied the town with machine-guns. The demonstrators fled, but a few arrests were effected. Ridwan is said to have escaped to Transjordania. Owing to its failure to deliver this culprit, the town is said to have had to pay an indemnity of £200 gold.

Commandant Tommy Martin, head of the Bureau des Renseignements at Damascus, left at once for Sodeida to investigate matters.

Since then there have been several cases of armed attacks on travellers and villagers by Druze bands in the mountain and the immediately adjoining Hauran.

It is held in some quarters that Captain Renaud, the acting Governor, is encouraging the movement against Captain Carbillot, whose place he would like to occupy definitively. I am unable to say what truth there is in this view. Anyhow, the situation in the Jebel Druze is, it would seem, being handled with that curious incoherence which during the last six months has characterised French policy in these parts. The French would, as indicated in my despatch above referred to, have been well advised to have yielded the shadow for the substance, given the Druzes their native Governor in accordance with France's written engagement, and then have controlled the mountain just as effectively by a French adviser with all the real power in his hands. If, however, France was resolved to impose not only a French Governor generally, but Captain Carbillot particularly, on the mountain against the manifest will of the Druzes, it is inconceivable why this agitation was allowed to grow. The only logical line to follow, once an unpopular policy had been decided upon, would have been to nip any agitation in the bud and hold the mountain by force. The present very illogical and un-French compromise appears to have thoroughly disturbed the Jebel Druze, and, in the absence of vigorous reaction, to be leading back to the

disorders which characterised the Druze country during the early days of the French régime. Perhaps the mandatory authority will, before the danger now apparent, pull itself together and resort again to the usual French colonial methods of maintaining order.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 4413/357/89]

No. 218.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 28.)*

(No. 120.)

Sir,  
WITH reference to correspondence ending with my despatch No. 116 of the 10th instant, I have the honour to report that the French authorities appear to have decided on a vigorous repression in the Jebel Druze.

Abdul Gaffar Pasha, Nasib Bey, Emir Hamad, Abdul Kerim Bey, and Yusuf Bey, leading chiefs of the predominant Attrache family, were, at the invitation of Captain Tommy Martin, enticed to Damascus on the pretext of a friendly discussion and liquidation of the whole dispute. The first three were, at Damascus, seized and taken off under military guard to Palmyra. The last two, who tried to escape to Sueida, have been kept in detention at their own house in Damascus. At the same time, four French armoured cars proceeded from here to Sueida in case of trouble when the news of the arrests became known in the mountain. Aeroplanes have, it is said, been sent to Ezraa to await developments.

Captain Tommy Martin also sent two French officers to Kurayeh, the village of Sultan Pasha Attrache, the leading spirit of the anti-French hostilities in the early days of the occupation. This chief was there with Mut'ib Pasha Attrache (see my despatch No. 65 of the 27th April last), and with a considerable escort of armed horsemen. The French officers invited the two chiefs to come into Sueida for a discussion. Both chiefs refused.

It is reported that orders have been issued by the French for the arrest of thirty-six other Druze sheikhs.

I need hardly insist on the danger of the methods adopted by the French. Methods of deception such as these were often practised successfully by Turkish rulers, who, however, had an altogether different system of dealing with these semi-tribal communities. Hitherto these dubious methods have not yet been generally associated by the native mind with European rulers. It is difficult to establish a peaceful administration on an European model in a country like Syria, unless, at least, the natives have confidence that the old system of government by Oriental methods of trickery is a thing of the past. It is quite certain that the Druzes, at any rate, will no longer have that assurance.

An American acquaintance of mine, who recently returned from a trip in the Jebel Druze, where he was the guest of various local chiefs, told me that there was considerable excitement all over the mountain, and in Damascus there is much talk, even in responsible native quarters, of a Druze rising. The sheikhs, it is said, realise the folly of fighting against armoured cars, machine guns and aeroplanes with tribal irregulars armed only with rifles and not sufficiently supplied with ammunition. But there is some fear that the sheikhs may not be able to restrain in their hot-headed and less intelligent followers, exasperated by the treacherous capture of their chiefs. It is to be hoped that counsels of wisdom will prevail, for a revolt would only result in a pitiless repression.

The belief that Captain Renault, the Acting Governor, is working against Captain Carbillot, is now confirmed to me from a sure source. Members of the Druze Government, formed by Captain Carbillot himself, admit to be co-operating with Captain Renault in this intrigue.

The situation in the Jebel Druze has stirred even the pro-French elements at Damascus. The editor of "Al Zaman" newspaper, a governmental organ hitherto under French influence, has published an appeal for the union of the two parties (the Governmental Party of Unity and the Nationalist Party of the People) to bring about a satisfactory settlement of the Jebel Druze situation by the return of the exiles. The editor points out that all the trouble has been caused for the sake of one

person named Carbillot. The implication evidently is that Carbillot should be sacrificed in the cause of peace.

The feeling against Captain Carbillot appears to be strong and not without justification. His mentality and methods seem to be better suited to North African conditions than to the peculiar and delicate conditions of the Druze community.

As I have indicated before, the Druze situation has been manifestly mishandled by French colonial officialdom, which, apart from its inability to adapt itself to the particular conditions of the mountain, has, during the last six months, been afflicted by an incoherence which is not at all in keeping with the logical realism of French colonial methods. It now appears decided to return to its traditions and to solve the problem by force. Obviously French force can overcome any possible Druze opposition, but it cannot solve the Druze problem, which will remain open after even the sternest repression.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 4440/1065/65]

No. 219.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 29.)*

(No. 123.)

Sir,  
Damascus, July 16, 1925.  
WITH reference to my despatch No. 59 of the 14th April last, I have the honour to report that thirty persons charged with participating in the riotous demonstrations against Lord Balfour have just been condemned by the "Juge de Paix" to terms of imprisonment varying from one to three days and a fine of 2 Syrian pounds (40 francs) each, costs being divided among them.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 4454/357/89]

No. 220.

*Consul-General Satow to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 29.)*

(No. 95.)

Sir,  
Beirut, July 20, 1925.  
WITH reference to my despatch No. 92 of the 8th July, I have the honour to report that the second degree elections for the new Representative Council duly took place on the 12th July.

2. The thirty Deputies elected, as previously on a confessional basis, are credited with being either supporters of the Government or in opposition to it. Probably many of them have no very decided views and are prepared to wait and see how the cat jumps. On the whole, it does not seem to matter very much, as the council will undoubtedly be kept well in hand and will probably prove a very obedient flock.

3. The council held its first meeting on the 16th July. After electing its president, a certain Moussa Effendi Nammour (a Maronite from the Bekaa district) and other officers, it adopted almost unanimously a previously prepared motion asking the French High Commissioner to put off the question of the election of the Governor until after the Organic Law had been prepared, and it also adopted another motion presented by one of the alleged Opposition Deputies asking the High Commissioner to hasten the preparation of the Organic Law.

4. The sequel has been the issue by General Sarrail of a decree No. 175 S, dated the 16th July, appointing M. Cayla to be permanently Governor of the Great Lebanon. M. Schœffler, of Damascus, replaces M. Cayla as Governor of the State of the Alaouites, and M. Privat-Aubouard succeeds M. Schœffler at Damascus as "delegate" of the High Commissioner. M. Solomiac, of the French High Commission, is appointed "delegate" to the State of the Great Lebanon, and M. Dumont "delegate" to the State of the Alaouites. He will act as Governor of that State until the return of M. Schœffler.

5. I am telling Mr. Smart privately, to whom these changes will be of interest, what I know about M. Privat-Aubouard, whom, despite a somewhat unprepossessing manner, I have always found friendly.

6. The judicial authorities are said to be holding an enquiry into the bribery and corruption which was so striking a feature of the elections of first degree, but I think one may safely assume that nothing useful will result from the enquiry. In this connection, it is curious to learn that General Sarrail recently informed the local correspondent of the "Times" that, on the occasion of the elections held in the time of General Gouraud, the French High Commission allotted 500,000 francs to the then Governor of the Lebanon for electioneering purposes.

I have, &c.  
H. E. SATOW.

No. 221.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 31.)*

(No. 27.)

(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, July 31, 1925.

FOLLOWING for Air Ministry from liaison officer:—

"Following is situation in Jebel Druse:—

"Rebels, estimated strength 6,000, are [? group omitted] exit from Soueida, where one French battalion is holding out. Unconfirmed report states that Sardiyeh and Sliot tribes are co-operating with rebels. French are assembling columns of all arms at Ezra. Approximate strength, 3,500. French hoping Bedouins will co-operate and attack from east. Aerial bombardment continues. Please inform Jerusalem."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

No. 222.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 3.)*

(No. 28.)

(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, August 3, 1925.

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Following is continuation of previous wire:—

"Operations in Jebel Druse are confined to area between Ezra and Soueida. Column moved from Ezra on 1st August, and by the evening of 2nd August, after considerable fighting, was established in Elmezrah, 7 miles north-west of Soueida. [? Rebels] counter-attacked on French left flank in the vicinity of Essijn. All quiet south of Soueida."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

[E 4577/357/89]

No. 223.

*Consul-General Satow to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 5.)*

(No. 99.)

Sir,

Beirut, July 22, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to report that the day before yesterday in the course of a demonstration in front of the Lebanon Government offices in the public square known as the Place des Canons, several persons were killed and wounded.

2. As from the 1st July of this year, commercial rents (i.e., rents of offices and shops) have been decontrolled, whereas the control of residential rents has been continued until the 1st July, 1926. This fact led a number of shopkeepers, fearful that landlords would at once raise their rents exorbitantly, to organise a movement for the closing of all shops on the 20th July by way of protest, and most shops appear actually to have been closed.

3. In addition to the closing of the shops a demonstration was held on the public square near the Government offices, and an interview with the Governor was demanded by the crowd. M. Cayla came down and promised the demonstrators that he would receive a deputation and examine their grievances.

[40021]

4. He then returned to his room, but apparently the crowd did not break up. The police and gendarmerie then tried to disperse it, and some arrests were effected. Matters then took a turn for the worse, and the crowd which up till then had been orderly began to stone the police and to break windows. The police and gendarmes in the end withdrew into the yard of the serail and the gates were closed. The crowd then directed its attention to a police station not far from the serail and broke windows. It next forcibly released a prisoner who had been arrested by gendarmes, beat the latter and broke the windows of the gendarmerie headquarters. A French officer who had effected an arrest was stoned. The crowd then turned once more towards the serail, demanding the release of the persons arrested, and also attacked a prison van which happened to pass. It seems to have been at this period in the proceedings that the police and gendarmes opened fire. While some fired in the air others fired at the crowd. Various casualties occurred, and it is reported that six persons were killed or died of wounds, while some fifteen others were wounded. Among the latter were a French gendarmerie officer named Kreiss and a M. Boustani, the Lebanese chief of the administrative section of the police. Soon afterwards a squadron of Spahis and some Senegalese infantry appeared with a machine gun which either fired blank or into the air. The Spahis dispersed the crowd, and about midday quiet was restored.

5. An official communiqué suggests that the trouble was due to the participation in the peaceful demonstration organised by the shopkeepers of certain persons whose aim it was to stir up trouble. The semi-official newspaper "La Syrie" suggests that the disorder is due to the unbridled attacks made by the opposition press on those in authority during the past six months. If that is so, the blame lies with those who allowed such licence to an irresponsible press. Another suggestion made is that Turkish agents helped to stir up the trouble. Others, again, lay the blame on the local police, and especially on M. Sivadon, their French chief, of whom I have heard French officials speak disparagingly. As regards the police themselves, a reliable eye-witness tells me that in the earlier stages of the demonstration they were behaving with considerable tact and restraint. This may well have been the case, but they are not well trained and easily lose their heads in an emergency such as that with which they were later confronted. However, an enquiry is to be held, and it may throw some light on the responsibility for what is a most regrettable incident.

6. It seems likely that the incident will tend to diminish French prestige, which has undoubtedly weakened during the past six months.

I have, &amp;c.

H. E. SATOW.

No. 224.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 5.)*

(Unnumbered.)

(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, August 5, 1925.

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry, repeated to Palestine, sent to Foreign Office:—

"Druse situation quiet. French compelled to [group omitted] Ezra, where reorganisation and reinforcement are taking place. Practicability of sending second column via Dersa and Bosra under consideration."

[E 4624/357/89]

No. 225.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 6.)*

(No. 128.)

Sir,

Damascus, July 25, 1925.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 120 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to report that about the 16th instant Captain Tommy Martin took over the Governorship of the Jebel Druze from Captain Renault, whose removal could hardly be delayed once repression had been decided upon.

Since then all communication has been interrupted between Damascus and the Jebel Druze. The press has been forbidden to publish any news about the mountain.

[14003]

The French authorities seem to be taking every precaution to prevent any news leaking through.

The result of this official censorship is of course that the most fantastic rumours are in circulation. I have thought it well at the moment to avoid showing interest in the Druze situation. Our ancient friendship with the Druzes and morbid French suspiciousness would be enough to create among French officials here a belief that we are somehow or other at the back of the movement. Already a rumour has been circulated that with some rebels captured was found a petition addressed to His Majesty's High Commissioner at Jerusalem, begging for the annexation of the mountain to Transjordania. I have therefore thought it advisable for the moment to avoid as much as possible seeing natives, all of course anti-French, who might be able to give an accurate information.

The rumours in circulation indicate fighting near Mismiyeh, a station on the Hedjaz line 50 kilom. south of Damascus and on the edge of the Leja, round Sueida, the capital of Jebel Druze, and between Salkhad and Araman to the extreme south of the mountain. The Druzes, it is also asserted, have enlisted the aid of the Sardiyeh Bedouins south of the mountain and the Slout Bedouins of the Leja. In view of the recent hostilities between the Druzes and the Slout the combination seems rather improbable.

Obviously, however, something serious is happening in the Jebel Druze. General Michaud, who, under General Sarrail, is in command of the whole "armée du Levant," has come from Beirut to Damascus, where he has temporarily established his headquarters. The French Press Bureau first issued an official communiqué to the effect that many exaggerated rumours are current, and that, in spite of certain incidents, there is no danger in the Jebel Druze, where tranquillity will be established thanks to the strong measures taken by the authorities. To-day a second communiqué has been issued, copy of which I have the honour to enclose.

It is to be feared that French repression will drive many Druzes across to Transjordania, where we shall find ourselves again saddled with most troublesome guests, who, from the shelter of our mandated territory, will, as has often happened before, endeavour to organise raids into Southern Syria.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

Enclosure in No. 225.

Note à la Presse.

LA propagande entreprise par le chef rebelle druze, Sultan Pacha-el-Atrache, ne trouve plus actuellement d'écho au Djebel.

2. De très nombreuses lettres émanant de plusieurs points du Djebel témoignent d'un attachement absolu à notre cause. Cette manifestation de loyalisme a eu une répercussion profonde sur l'ensemble des familles du Djebel, dont la plupart ont été entraînées dans le mouvement malgré elles et souvent même après avoir été victimes, de la part des rebelles, d'actes de violences caractérisés.

3. Par répression de très nombreux actes de banditisme (assassinats, pillages, incendies) commis par les rebelles à l'encontre de populations paisibles et qui refusaient de prendre part à la révolte, plusieurs tonnes d'explosifs ont été lancés sur quelques foyers de dissidence. Le bombardement a eu lieu avec un plein succès.

4. Il est confirmé que Moustafa, frère de Sultan, a été tué; Ali, un autre frère de Sultan Pacha, est grièvement blessé.

Damas, le 25 juillet 1925.

[E 4626/357/89]

No. 226.

Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 6.)

(No. 130.)

Sir,

IN continuation of correspondence ending with my despatch No. 128 of the 25th instant, I have the honour to report that Christian refugees from the Jebel Druze have begun to arrive here with tales of Druze pillaging and burning of Christian villages

and even murdering of Christians. As usual, it would appear that the unfortunate native Christians have to bear the brunt of any national resentment against European intervention.

2. The Druze unrest, having developed into a regular state of war, will no doubt be now reported on by the British liaison officer, who has just visited Damascus and got into touch with General Michaud's staff.

3. The concentration of the French punitive column is timed to be complete by the 30th instant. Already, yesterday, a large portion of it moved out of Damascus along the Hauran road. Meanwhile Commandant Tommy Martin is besieged in Sueida, with which, however, communication is maintained by aeroplane and wireless. The French have already sustained appreciable losses, the extent of which is concealed. It is estimated that from 8,000 to 10,000 rebels, Druzes and Bedouins, are in the field. The French punitive column, when complete, should number about 3,000 men. Considerable anxiety is evident in French circles here.

4. It is obvious that a serious situation is in prospect for Transjordania, into which the rebels, when defeated, are likely to pour. I understand from the British liaison officer that the French authorities have requested us to close the frontier, and no doubt all the possibilities of the situation are being studied by our civil and military authorities. I will therefore confine myself to inviting attention to the harm which can easily be done to Anglo-French relations in Syria by any inability on our part to respond to reasonable French wishes at this crisis. Transjordania has a bad reputation in French circles. Too often it has been the refuge and jumping-off ground of rebels and bandits operating against France in Syria. The events of last summer are still fresh in local memories. Now a much more serious situation is developing. French blood is being shed, and considerable expenditure being incurred. French feeling will undoubtedly be aroused before the end of the campaign, and, if the rebels find any facilities in our mandated territory, we can be sure that French resentment will be extreme.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

No. 227.

Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 7.)

(No. 29.)

(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, August 7, 1925.

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:

"Druse situation unchanged. Sarrail awaiting reinforcements from France. A certain anxiety prevails in Damascus and Aleppo owing to diminution of garrison."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

No. 228.

Mr. Phipps to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 10.)

[By Bag.]

(No. 279. Confidential.)

(Telegraphic.)

Paris, August 9, 1925.

I LEARN on excellent authority that M. Briand and M. Berthelot are exasperated with General Sarrail, for whose recall from Syria they have been pressing. It seems that M. Briand only received the curtest of telegrams from General Sarrail announcing the setback suffered by the French at the hands of the Druses, and that when he telegraphed for further information General Sarrail merely replied that he was forwarding it by messenger. The press to-day publishes a communiqué issued by the Ministry for War stating that the Government still await details regarding the events which occurred on the 4th and 5th instant, and adding that the only telegram received yesterday from General Sarrail stated that there was no military event to report in the Jebel Druse from the 6th to the morning of the 7th instant.

M. Painlevé, for political reasons, dares not, at any rate for the present, recall the general, who is *persona grata* with the Left, and his unwillingness in this respect must be probably increased by the somewhat compromising praise which the press of the Right have lately been bestowing upon him. However, the present idea is, in about two months' time, to endeavour to please both the Right, by the recall of General Sarrail from Syria, and the Left, by that of Marshal Lyautey from Morocco, both being replaced by civilians.

[E 4739/357/89]

No. 229.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 11.)*

(No. 133.)

Sir,  
*Damascus, July 29, 1925.*  
 IN continuation of correspondence ending with my despatch No. 130 of the 27th instant, it is reported that a Druze band made a raid on the Hedjaz Railway between the stations of Dair Ali and Al Misneyyeh (31 and 30 kilom. south of Damascus respectively), destroying part of the rails and a culvert. The train for Deraa which left Damascus yesterday morning had to return owing to the interruption of the line. This band held up a motor car at the same spot and robbed its occupants. French armoured cars were sent out at once, but apparently the band had disappeared. The French at once issued a communiqué to the effect that civilian transport on the line had been suspended owing to the necessities of military transport. The line was, however, quickly repaired, and the train for Deraa left again to-day.

2. The importance of this Druze move, if true, is obvious. The French concentration is taking place at Ezra, a station on the Hedjaz line, 91 kilom. south of Damascus. From Ezra there is a good motor road to Soueida. Destructions of the line north of Ezra would of course hamper the concentration and the subsequent advance. It is also reported that the Druzes have done their best to damage the motor road between Ezra and Soueida by destroying bridges and digging trenches, &c.

3. It is reported that the Attrache chiefs, Nassib, Abdul Ghaffar Pasha and Emir Hamad, have been brought to Damascus (see my despatch No. 120 of the 15th instant). It is also rumoured that the French authorities are trying to negotiate with the rebel leader, Sultan Pasha Attrache, through them and other Druze personalities.

4. A proclamation has been scattered from aeroplanes in the Mountain warning the Druzes against following the adventurer, Sultan Pasha Attrache, who, without knowing it, is leading his country to complete ruin, and has been joined by some fanatics unable to realise the harm they are doing to their country's welfare. Prompt punishment is announced for the rebels, but pardon is offered to those who have been led astray by Sultan Pasha but return to their allegiance in time. The proclamation is in very literary Arabic, which will be unintelligible to the Druzes. It shows obvious signs of translation from a French original, and perhaps is the work of an Algerian interpreter, better versed in literary Arabic than most Syrians.

5. French communiqués continue to be threatening, but not very enlightening. To-day's communiqué reveals that the Druzes are making attacks on the citadel of Soueida, where Commandant Tommy Martin is besieged. It is claimed that these attacks have been repulsed with heavy Druze and insignificant French losses. Sultan Pasha's village, Al Quraya, has been bombed successfully it is claimed.

6. Captain Terrier, head of the Contrôle bédouin, and Nouri Shalaan, chief of the Ruala, have left for Ateiba and Hijaneh, south-east of Damascus, whence it is proposed to send a Ruala tribal force against the Mountain from the eastern side. Attempts to enlist irregulars—Circassian in the Deraa region and Kurdish at Damascus—are reported not to have been so far very successful.

7. Christian refugees flocking to Damascus bring harrowing tales of massacre and pillage by the Druzes. These unfortunate Christians, who have lived so long side by side with the Druzes, were not concerned with this conflict between the Druzes and the French. As usual in these countries, an anti-foreign movement, when it reaches a certain stage, inevitably develops into fanatical and murderous violence against all Christians, native or European. It has been urged by some Druzes that their Bedouin allies were responsible for the wanton attack on harmless Christian villages, but obviously the Bedouin could not have attacked the Christians without Druze co-operation.

8. The Druze rebellion is of course causing considerable satisfaction in Nationalist circles, and hopes of a general rising in the country are entertained in some native quarters. The authorities are showing signs of nervousness and police precautions are being multiplied.

9. It is essential that the French should strike hard and quickly if larger complications are to be avoided. Any serious setback at the beginning would encourage all the many native elements of disaffection. The losses suffered by the tribes and the villages through the severity of the winter (see my despatch No. 47 of the 10th March last), the subsequent drought and the poor harvest in Southern Syria have created much economic suffering, which in such a country tends, even under the most favourable circumstances, to provoke unrest and brigandage. This serious rebellion, if not quickly mastered, will encourage many impoverished tribes and villagers to seize the opportunity for general brigandage.

10. The editors of the Damascus papers have been warned by the delegation that the publication of any news about the rebellion, other than the official communiqués, will involve suppression of the paper concerned and the trial of its editor by court-martial.

I have, &c.  
 W. G. SMART.

[E 4781/357/89]

No. 230.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 12.)*

(No. 135.)

Sir,  
*Damascus, August 1, 1925.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 133 of the 29th ultimo, I am informed that the French advance from Ezra began yesterday. Forty wounded French Algerian soldiers arrived at the Hedjaz station at Damascus yesterday afternoon.

2. It is reported that the French have scattered proclamations in the Jebel Druze announcing the advance, and warning the inhabitants that shots fired from any village at the troops will involve its total destruction.

3. M. Aubouard, the new French delegate, who called on me yesterday, told me that Commandant Tommy Martin and his garrison in the citadel at Soueida had food and water for a month and that they were in no danger.

4. M. Aubouard also spoke about the frontier question, and expressed the hope that we would do what we could to prevent the rebels finding refuge in our territory. I laid stress on the difficulty in effectively closing a semi-desert frontier, and he seemed to appreciate the difficulty.

5. A detachment of the camel corps has been brought in from Palmyra to participate in the offensive.

6. The Nationalists here have been expecting the proclamation of martial law at Damascus, and many of them have scattered to the villages and to the Lebanon in order to avoid giving any opportunity to the authorities to accuse them of sedition. Lutfi Bey Al Haffar, a prominent member of the "Party of People," has been informed by the chief of police that his party will be held responsible for any trouble at Damascus. It is said that the "Party of Unity," in order to ruin its opponents, is trying to persuade the French that the Nationalists are implicated in the Druze rebellion. Notices in pencil were distributed on the 30th instant urging the people to close the bazaars on the following day (Friday) and demonstrate in favour of the Druzes. The Nationalists opposed this movement as being useless and harmful.

7. It is said that many of the Druzes have sent their families to Kasr-i-Azraq for safety.

8. M. Aubouard informed me that the Government had sent 100,000 fr. for the relief of Christian refugees from the Jebel Druze now in the Hauran.

I have, &c.  
 W. A. SMART.

No. 231.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 12.)*

(No. 32.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, August 12, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"French are taking no further offensive action against Druses for at least ten days."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

[E 4815/357/89]

No. 232.

*Mr. Phipps to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 14.)*

(No. 1794.)

Sir,

*Paris, August 13, 1925.*

IN my despatches No. 1771 of the 10th August and No. 1783 of the 11th August I had the honour to transmit to you copies of two communiqués issued by the French Government regarding the situation in the Jebel Druze.

2. A more complete statement has now been published by the Government, and I have the honour to enclose a copy of this communiqué\* herein. It is stated therein that the total casualties suffered by the French troops in recent disturbances amount to, approximately, 800.

3. You will observe that, not unnaturally, in the opening passages of this official communiqué, which gives a short résumé of the history of the Jebel Druze from the time of the assumption of the mandate by the French Government, no mention is made of the fact, so often referred to in reports from His Majesty's consul at Damascus, that the French Government are themselves largely to blame for the present outbreak owing to their continual refusal to appoint a native governor, in spite of their previous undertaking to do so.

4. Although the apprehension which was at first caused by the news, or rather by the lack thereof, from Syria has now died down, there can be little doubt that General Sarrail's position has been very considerably shaken. He has of course from the outset been bitterly attacked by the "Echo de Paris" and other organs of the *Bloc national*, but his recent actions in connection with the disturbances in the Jebel Druze and his apparently complete neglect to keep the Metropolitan Government informed of the actual events has met with very severe criticism from all the more moderate newspapers.

5. In a letter addressed to the President of the Council and published in yesterday's newspapers M. Ferry, a *Bloc national* Deputy and former Minister, announces his intention of interpellating the Government on the Syrian question on the reassembling of the Chambers. M. Ferry roundly declares that "General Sarrail has by his actions dangerously compromised the prestige of France in the East." From this letter it may be assumed that the Nationalist Opposition intend to press for the recall of the High Commissioner.

6. Finding it somewhat difficult to defend General Sarrail's actions on their merits, beyond asserting that both General Gouraud and General Weygand experienced similar troubles in Syria, the organs of the Left are endeavouring to set up an analogy between the events in the Jebel Druze and those which have taken place in Morocco, pointing out that if the Right have grounds for complaint against General Sarrail, the Left have equally strong objections to Marshal Lyautey, who, in their eyes, is primarily responsible for the situation in Morocco. It would seem that the Left are determined that if General Sarrail is to be sacrificed, Marshal Lyautey must be recalled at the same time.

7. In their desire to strengthen their case and emphasise the analogy between Morocco and Syria, some of the newspapers seem to have unnecessarily exaggerated their statements. To-day's "Ère nouvelle," for example, solemnly declares that "it is common knowledge that the events in Syria are connected with those in the Riff and may even be considered as the logical sequence of the latter. A 'frémissement

\* Not printed.

d'Islam' is running through all the nations subjected to Western civilisation. We may therefore draw the conclusion that the Druze revolt has its origin in the success of Abd-el-Krim, and, since the prime cause of the Riffian success is the failure of Marshal Lyautey, therefore Lyautey is responsible for the failure of Sarrail."

8. Such a process of deduction, neglecting the fact that the Druzes are not, properly speaking, Moslems (see "Peace Handbook" No. 60, p. 49) and live in comparative isolation, and ignoring the fact that the Druzes, a subject race, are in revolt on account of their misgovernment by the French, while Abd-el-Krim, an independent power, in fact if not in theory, deliberately attacked the French and invaded their protectorate, is not convincing. It may, however, suffice to mislead public opinion.

I have, &c.  
ERIC PHIPPS.

No. 233.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 14.)*

(No. 33.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, August 14, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"It is reported that following individuals in Transjordania have promised to co-operate with Druses and advance on Deraa: Mekal Pasha El [ ? Fa]yer; Adis-el-Kurish; Mendaour Benadid."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

No. 234.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 17.)*

(No. 34.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, August 17, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"French still endeavouring to settle Druse trouble amicably. Rebels yesterday handed over one French officer prisoner and fifty-three men. Rebels no longer firing at French aeroplanes."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

[E 4900/357/89]

No. 235.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 18.)*

(No. 137.)

Sir,

*Damascus, August 5, 1925.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 126 of the 20th ultimo, I have the honour to report that M. Aubouard, the new French delegate, who arrived here recently, paid me his formal visit on the 31st ultimo, and I returned his call to-day.

2. M. Aubouard's attitude was extremely friendly and apparently frank. I expressed my satisfaction at this opportunity of renewing the cordial relations which had existed between us at Beirut, and my conviction that our relations at Damascus would be equally satisfactory. He replied that he was sure that they would be, and he added that he would do what he could to please me. He gave me the impression of being anxious to dispel the clouds of his predecessor's régime.

3. I took the opportunity to express the hope that he would not believe all the stories told him by native mischief makers, whose object was to disunite us for their own ends. Many Arabs, who were among the supporters of the Feisalian régime here and adversaries of France, had sometimes to come to the consulate on business connected with their friends or material interests in Irak, in Transjordania and Palestine. Often

they merely came to facilitate the issue of visas to acquaintances of theirs. The consulate obviously could not close its doors to the native public. It was possible, however, that such casual business visits were represented by native agents as being of political significance. I could assure him that such was not the case, and that when any such visitors spoke against France I was always careful to contradict them. He could count on me never to do anything to make things more difficult for the French. I had been Francophile before the *Entente cordiale* and was still Francophile now that, unfortunately, the *Entente* was perhaps a little less cordial than formerly. Apart from this aspect of personal sympathy, I was convinced that, whatever might be the case elsewhere, the interests of our two countries here were absolutely identical. In conclusion, I begged him to speak to me frankly whenever people told him any stories about me or the consulate. I was sure that I could in every case clear up any possible misunderstandings.

4. M. Aubouard thanked me for my assurances, and said that, from what he had heard about me from Mr. Satow, he was sure he could count on me. He accepted my suggestion, and would speak to me frankly whenever any stories against me were brought to him. He finally volunteered to give me information of general interest whenever such was in his possession.

5. Too much weight cannot of course be given to conventional exchanges of amities on such inaugurations of official relations. No doubt, too, M. Aubouard will be influenced by the old anti-British personnel of the delegation. Yet my first contact here with M. Aubouard has left on me a hopeful impression. His apparent frankness was, anyhow, a very pleasant change from his predecessor's attitude. For instance, he spoke to me about French difficulties in the Druse revolt with the frankness of a man talking to another taken for granted to be on his side. Such a tone was singularly absent from M. Schoeffler's conversation, even in cases when he knew quite well that I was whole-heartedly co-operating with him. It is too much to hope that M. Aubouard will remain immune from that anti-British bias which is so particularly characteristic of French officialdom at Damascus. I have hopes, however, that he will never allow this general Anglophobia to pass beyond the limits of decency, as was the case under his predecessor. I will, of course, endeavour from my side to facilitate this return to a more normal state of affairs by discreetly effacing myself as far as is consistent with the maintenance of legitimate British interests, and thus giving as little opportunity as possible for hostile outbreaks. I would, however, like to emphasise one point, namely, that the condition of Anglo-French relations at Damascus is powerfully determined by what is done in our adjoining mandated territories. No efforts of mine are of any use, for instance, against such incidents as the raids of Transjordanian bands into Syria last summer. I sometimes doubt whether our mandatory authorities fully realised the French bitterness provoked by those incidents. If, therefore, it is the desire of His Majesty's Government that friendly Anglo-French relations should be maintained at Damascus, I hope that our mandatory authorities in Palestine, Transjordania and Irak will bear in mind the inevitable reactions here of anything done in those countries against French interests in Syria. It is not at all unlikely that the present Druse rebellion may shortly provide us with an opportunity of co-operating, or failing to co-operate, with France in preventing our mandated territory from again becoming the refuge and jumping-off ground of Syrian rebels. Our handling of such a situation will have a very direct influence on Anglo-French relations at Damascus.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 4898/357/89]

No. 236.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 18.)*

(No. 138.)

Sir,  
IN continuation of my despatch No. 135 of the 1st instant, I regret to have to report that the French advance from Ezra has, for the moment, ended in a most unfortunate failure.

2. The expeditionary force apparently advanced without opposition to Busr-al-Hariri, where in normal times there would have been water. Owing, however, to this year's drought, the springs of this village, as is the case in many other villages of the

Hauran and the Jebel Druse, have entirely dried up. Incidentally, it is to be noticed that the unusual water conditions of this rainless year are, in the whole of this region, exceptionally unfavourable for military operations. The French accordingly had to advance to the spring known as "Ain Kersa," about two-thirds of the way from Ezra to Sobeida. At this water-point they were attacked by a mixed force of Druses and Bedouins. I understand from M. Aubouard, the French delegate, that the Syrian Legion, in the vanguard, was seized with panic and fled. Owing to this initial disaster the French were apparently unable to capture and hold this essential water-point. Consequently, owing to lack of water behind the force, General Michaud ordered a general retreat to Ezra. Considerable numbers of wounded have been brought into Damascus.

3. It is to be feared that Sobeida may have fallen, or, anyhow, be in serious difficulties. M. Aubouard told me to-day that the French had now been two days without news of Commandant Tommy Martin, the commander of the small garrison, with whom hitherto wireless connection had been maintained.

4. The effect of this reverse on the native allies of the French is bound to be very adverse. Already the desertion of a few Druses in the Syrian Legion stationed at Kuneitra is reported. The news of the defeat has of course created a stir at Damascus, but Nationalist jubilation does not appear as yet to be assuming any violent forms. I would, however, invite a reference to the 9th paragraph of my despatch No. 133 of the 29th ultimo. It is now more than ever necessary that the French should take rapid and vigorous measures to retrieve the situation and thus give no time to the numerous disaffected elements to raise their heads in town, countryside and desert. Unfortunately there are not wanting signs of French irresolution. Attempts at negotiation with the rebels are still being made (see the 3rd paragraph of my despatch No. 133 of the 29th ultimo). Abdul Ghaffar Pasha Attrache has been sent by the French for this purpose to the present Druse military headquarters at Sijn, near the scene of the French reverse. Druse notables from the Lebanon have come here and left for the Mountain on a mission of conciliation. The press bureau has issued a communiqué to the effect that certain Druse chiefs have expressed the wish to open negotiations, and that probably some general political changes will take place in the Jebel Druse. This policy of negotiation, after a military reverse, can only be interpreted as weakness, and will encourage the rebels in their resistance.

5. The French are said to be trying to retain the loyalty of the Hauran sheikhs by granting now the wide remissions of taxation and the subsidies recently refused (see my despatch No. 119 of the 15th ultimo). It is also said that the sheikhs have been offered a considerable sum of money to send an irregular force to co-operate in the campaign against the Druses.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

No. 237.

*Mr. Phipps to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 18.)*

(No. 288.)  
(Telegraphic.)

[By Bag.]

Paris, August 17, 1925.

I ENQUIRED to-day of the Political Director of the Quai d'Orsay whether the "Daily Mail" reports in regard to peace in Syria were well founded. M. Laroche replied that they were, and that the Druses had already begun to return their prisoners to the French.

[E 4920/357/89]

No. 238.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 19.)*

(No. 139.)  
Sir,

Damascus, August 6, 1925.

WITH reference to the first paragraph of my despatch No. 130 of the 27th ultimo and the seventh paragraph of my despatch No. 133 of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to report that three Protestant refugees from the Christian village of Kharaba, in the extreme south-west of the Jebel Druse, came to the consulate to-day in the hope of obtaining some relief. I referred them to the Irish Presbyterian Mission

2. They appeared to be intelligent persons and they gave me some interesting details of the beginnings of hostilities in the Jebel Druse.

3. After the arrival of Commandant Tommy Martin (see my despatch No. 128 of the 25th ultimo), a detachment of about ninety men, thirty of whom were Druse gendarmes and the remainder Algerian soldiers under French officers, was despatched from Soueida to reinforce the southern French post of Salkhad, which was in charge of a French lieutenant. At Kafar, halfway between Soueida and Salkhad, the detachment halted for the midday meal at a spring. Assad Murshid, the Sheikh of Kafar, came out to welcome the soldiers and insisted on providing a meal for them. Three large trays of "burghul," a staple Arab dish, were placed by his men at the spring, and the soldiers gathered round them to eat. When they were thus conveniently concentrated, the Druses, who had taken up positions of advantage all round, opened fire on the unsuspecting group. The Druse gendarmes, with one exception, deserted the French to join their kinsmen, but were mostly shot by the soldiers before getting away. The Algerians appear to have put up a good fight and to have killed a number of Druses, including Mustafa Bey and Ali Bey, brother and cousin respectively of Sultan Pasha Attrache. However, taken at such an obvious disadvantage, the soldiers were all killed, except about ten who managed to escape. Two French officers were among the killed.

4. Three days later Hasan Bey, son of Yahia Pasha Attrache, came to the village of Kharaba with three horsemen and told the Christians that they had nothing to fear. Nevertheless, shortly afterwards a mixed force of Druses and Bedouins attacked the village. The villagers, fearing that, if they killed any Druses, retaliation would be severe, tried to keep the assailants off by firing over their heads. At last, the whole population, men, women and children, fled, leaving all their belongings in the hands of the attackers. Only four Christians, two men and two women, were killed.

5. The French lieutenant with his few men at Salkhad managed to escape in time, but his dragoman was killed. The only other French post in the mountain, viz., Shahba, in the north, was also evacuated in time.

6. The Druses asked the sheikhs of Bosri Eski Sham to surrender that place to them, but the sheikhs refused.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

No. 239.

*Mr. Phipps to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 19.)*

(No. 289.) [By Bag.] Paris, August 18, 1925.  
(Telegraphic.)

I CONVEYED to the President of the Council this afternoon the message contained in your despatch No. 2743 of 14th August. M. Painlevé begged me to thank you warmly for your kind message, and to assure you that he had much appreciated the attitude of the authorities and troops in the British mandated territories neighbouring on Syria.

2. M. Painlevé told me confidentially that in his opinion there had been grave carelessness on the part of the French military authorities in leaving the convoy so far behind the troops. He added that, although General Sarrail had not reported the incident, he had heard from other sources that half a dozen French aeroplanes which had flown low to the rescue of the convoy had been shot down. I enquired whether the peace negotiations with the Druses were proceeding satisfactorily, and M. Painlevé replied that in the case of certain Druse families they were, and he hoped that pacification would soon be completed without any loss of French prestige.

[E 5020/357/89]

No. 240.

*Consul-General Satow to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 24.)*

(No. 107. Confidential.)  
Sir,

THE following information regarding the position in Jebel Druse is taken from a report of the British liaison officer, which he has kindly shown me. Copies of this report have been sent by him to the Air Ministry, Cairo, Jerusalem, Bagdad and Aleppo.

2. By the evening of the 30th July there were concentrated at Ezraa on the Damascus-Deraa Railway five battalions of infantry, three squadrons of cavalry, two batteries of mountain guns ("65"), two "75" guns, two "105" guns and a detachment of armoured cars. This concentration was covered by a battalion south-east of the village of Busr-al-Haridi, which is 7 miles east-south-east of Ezraa, and was in contact with the enemy. According to the information available, the enemy, while dispersed in small bands all over the country, had organised a fairly strong defensive position 2 or 3 miles south-east of the village named.

3. The column, composed of three battalions, with cavalry on the flanks and armoured cars and artillery well in the rear, advanced on the 31st July. The two objectives were Busr-al-Haridi and the water-point of Al-Mezran, 7 miles north-west of Soueida.

4. The village was occupied without incident, but strong opposition was met with 3 miles to the east of it. The position was taken, but with difficulty, as the Druses fought well. It is understood that the French casualties were fairly heavy, but exact information on this point is not available. On the evening of the 2nd August the column was established immediately east of Al-Mezran.

5. On the 3rd August it became clear that the ground gained could not be consolidated. The Druses harassed the rear of the column and were able to prevent an important ammunition column from joining the main column. In these circumstances it was decided to withdraw to Ezraa and reorganise and reinforce the original column. The question of forming a second column to advance via Deraa and Bosra is under consideration.

6. The French command has had to contend with unexpectedly great difficulties. The main problem is that of water. The country is unusually dry this year, and the carefully prepared water arrangements have proved inadequate. Water supply by pack or other transport is most difficult owing to the large escorts required. The troops have suffered intensely from the great heat in a country where there is no shade. In some cases men were practically unable to move after a few hours in the field. The country is difficult in that the numberless small rocks and boulders offer great shelter to snipers. Armoured cars are of little use off the roads and tracks. So many men are required for lines of communication purposes as to handicap seriously the fighting force.

7. Major Salisbury-Jones adds that the French authorities appear to be very grateful for our co-operation on the Transjordan front. There are naturally rumours and suggestions that we are not altogether foreign to the rising of the Druses, whose former friendship with the British is not forgotten. We do all we can here to combat the idea, and I think that all reasonable Frenchmen understand that we have nothing to do with the matter and do not take the suggestions too seriously.

8. There is a certain uneasiness here about the situation, and undoubtedly the rising could not have occurred at a worse time of year. Yesterday a new battalion of Algerian troops arrived and further reinforcements are expected.

I have, &c.  
H. E. SATOW.

No. 241.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 24.)*

(No. 35.) (Telegraphic.) Beirut, August 24, 1925.

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:

"High Commissioner informs me 700 mounted Beni Sak[? er] and Beni Hassan have crossed frontier. If confirmed, urgently request every possible step be taken to prevent recurrence, which increases unpleasant suspicion already existing here. Above already reported in conflict with French High Commissioner still vaguely hoping for peaceful settlement. General opinion here very strongly in favour of dealing rebels decisive blow. Expect latter course will prevail. Total reinforcements promised by 30th August are 5 battalions of infantry, 2 squadrons of cavalry, 1 company of tanks, 18 aeroplanes. Uncertain whether other units will follow later to complete division. Column cannot start [? for] at least [? three] days. Request that you inform me if any action taken."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

No. 242.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 26.)*

(No. 36.)

(Telegraphic.)

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

" Fighting took place 24th August 5 miles south-east of Damascus between French cavalry and 500 Druses and Bedouins. French affirm that Transjordanian Bedouins identified among them. Rebels driven off. Considerable panic at Damascus. Enquiring other dates, &c."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

[E 4900/357/89]

No. 243.

*Foreign Office to Consul Smart (Damascus).*

(No. 59.)

Sir,

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 137 of the 5th August relative to your interviews with M. Aubouard, the new French delegate at Damascus.

2. Mr. Chamberlain approves your language and attitude on this occasion, which is just such as he would wish you to continue. There is a very cordial understanding and hearty co-operation between the Governments of Paris and London at the present time, and Mr. Chamberlain hopes that these happy relations between the two Governments will in time improve the atmosphere at Damascus.

I am, &amp;c.

THOMAS SPRING-RICE.

[E 5176/357/89]

No. 244.

*Mr. Phipps to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 31.)*

(No. 1874.)

Sir,

Paris, August 29, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 1794 of the 13th August regarding the present situation in Syria, I have the honour to inform you that little or no news of importance concerning the revolt in the Jebel Druse has recently appeared in the Paris newspapers. From the scanty articles and messages which have appeared in the press during the last ten days the casual reader might have imagined that the trouble in Syria had practically died down, and that the French authorities had the situation well in hand. This complacent attitude has been rudely disturbed by the recent articles in the London newspapers taking a much more gloomy view of the position and hinting at the possibility of still more serious trouble to come.

2. No doubt with a view to dissipating the apprehensions thus caused, M. Painlevé, at the termination of the Cabinet Council held on the 27th August, issued a statement regarding the actual position in Syria. As you will observe in this statement, of which I have the honour to enclose the text,\* the President of the Council announced that he had received no fresh news from General Sarrail, and warned the French public of the danger of attributing too much importance to rumours coming from British sources.

3. This declaration of M. Painlevé has, however, by no means satisfied the Paris newspapers, and both the "Echo de Paris" and the "Avenir" attack the Government once again, accusing them of wilfully concealing information from the public. Yesterday's papers also contain a Havas communiqué purporting to emanate from Beirut, but which is assumed to have been issued by the Government, giving an account of the outbreak of the rebellion. A copy of this communiqué is transmitted herewith.\* It is interesting to note that a considerable portion thereof is taken up by a defence of Captain Carbillot and by an endeavour to fix the blame for the revolt not upon him, but upon the Druses themselves. It is of further interest to observe that it is stated that both Turkish and Russian propaganda are active in Syria at the present time.

\* Not printed.

4. So far no allusions have been made in the newspapers to the attacks which have recently been made upon the French by natives from Transjordania (see Beirut telegram No. 35), and no hostile criticism has yet been levelled against His Majesty's Government on this score.

I have, &amp;c.

ERIC PHIPPS.

[E 5252/357/89]

No. 245.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 2.)*

(No. 151.)

Sir,

Damascus, August 21, 1925.

WITH reference to correspondence ending with my despatch No. 144 of the 12th instant regarding the Druse rebellion, I have the honour to report that the past ten days have been in the nature of an interlude, during which peace negotiations have been continuing and some French reinforcements arriving. An exchange of prisoners has been effected. The Druse sheiks imprisoned at Hasecheh and Palmyra were brought to Damascus, whence most of them, with those detained here, were sent back to the mountain in return for the French military captured during the recent hostilities.

2. It is reported that civilian traffic on the railway from Beirut to Damascus and Damascus to Deraa is to be suspended for some time during the movement of the larger reinforcements now arrived at Beirut.

3. The local impression is that the peace negotiations are unlikely to be successful.

4. A troublesome feature of the situation is the inevitable appearance of bands in the countryside. These bands are always accused of being Druses, but I think that they are probably of many kinds—Druses, Bedouins, villagers, deserters from the Syrian Legion, bad characters from the towns. The universal misery, caused by the present disastrous economic situation, a picture of which is summarily presented in the enclosed despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade, is everywhere arming the people against authority. These bands operate with great daring in the immediate neighbourhood of Damascus. One such band recently attacked at Merjaneh, 35 kilom. south of Damascus, General Soulé, commander of the "Cavalerie du Levant," who, with his aide-de-camp, Captain de Goutel, and a Circassian gendarme, was motoring from Damascus to Ezra on an inspection trip. General Soulé received three wounds, apparently slight, in the arm and legs, but one of Captain de Goutel's arms was so badly fractured by bullets that it is not certain whether amputation can be avoided. The chauffeur was slightly wounded. The Circassian gendarme apparently behaved with great gallantry. The party managed to escape to the railway, and was fortunate enough to meet a train coming from Deraa, which took them all to Damascus. The inhabitants of Merjaneh participated in the attack, and this small village has been partially destroyed by the French. A number of the villagers were killed. It is said that this village belongs to two Damascene families, members of which took part in the recent agitation in the town (see paragraph 7 of my despatch No. 144 of the 12th instant). It is even rumoured that the Damascene notables in question organised the attack and were in the village at the time.

5. Suleiman, Ibn Saud's representative here, declares that the attack was put up by Nouri Shalaan, the Ruala chief. Suleiman says that he has knowledge of treasonable letters written by Nouri to the Druse rebels, and that he hopes to be able to get hold of these letters and give them to the French delegation.

6. Whatever may be the ultimate facts of the case, it is certain that this attack was premeditated, and that news must have been given beforehand from Damascus of the general's trip.

7. Conflicts are recurring between Christians and Druses in the villages on the western slopes of Mount Hermon, and, according to press report, considerable savagery is now characterising these hostilities.

8. It is reported that a fight has taken place at Karyatein between detachments of the Syrian Legion and the Camel Corps. Of the former three, according to this report, were killed and seven wounded.

9. Amir Said Jezairli, who has just returned from Palestine, where he had been trying to placate his Algerians whose villages he has sold to the Zionists, called on me yesterday and expressed himself in very pessimistic terms. He said that a band 200 strong had appeared at Sehnayya and Ashrafeyeh, two adjoining villages with a mixed Druse-Christian population, about 9 miles south of Damascus and near one of the Amir's farms. He was sure that, if Druse bands in any strength approached Damascus, they would be joined by all the surrounding villagers and could easily effect an entrance into the town, on the co-operation of which they could count. The French troops, in the midst of a hostile population, were not sufficient to preserve order.

10. It is curious how widespread these apprehensions are among both natives and Europeans at Damascus. The Nationalists are alive to the danger of rioting and plundering in the event of any serious weakening of French authority, and have taken steps to organise a voluntary policing of the different quarters by their own inhabitants in case of an emergency. I think that all this pessimism is exaggerated and can only be justified on the assumption that the French conduct of the political and military situation is in the future to be as incoherent as in the past.

11. To the layman, a weakness in the military situation seems to be that the northern approaches to the mountain as well as the inaccessible, brigand-infested Leja are not covered by any military force. It is indeed surprising that bands have not more frequently issued from the Leja to destroy the exposed railway between Damascus and the French offensive base at Ezra. This failure seems to indicate lack of any offensive organisation among the rebels.

12. Another danger to be considered is that of the numerous ex-officers of the Turkish army living at Damascus, discontented with their inadequate pensions. It is rumoured that a number of them have proceeded to the mountain. Obviously, these officers would be a dangerous organising element among the unorganised but courageous Druses. The above-mentioned reports may largely, however, be only anticipations of possibilities. The Druses have captured French artillery, armoured cars, mitrailleuses and ammunition. If even one or two artillery officers had gone among them, it seems unlikely that some sort of a bombardment of the Sueida citadel would not have been attempted. Hitherto the citadel has been impregnable, because the Druses have only been able to attack with rifle-fire.

13. One factor in favour of the French is that the Druses are not popular among the Moslems or Christians. The sympathy for the Druses at present shown by the population is solely caused by antipathy to France. The Hauranis are almost hostile to the Druses, whom they accuse of having refused to help the Hauran during the rebellion of 1920 against the French. This Haurani hostility to the Druses is invaluable to the French, and without it they would hardly have kept open the railway to Deraa.

14. Captain Huguenet, the administrative adviser to the Hauran, has, according to the press, been removed from his post. It is said that he ordered all French women to leave Deraa for Damascus, and that General Sarrail was irritated by this action, which naturally encouraged native doubts as to the solidity of the French position.

15. With reference to the tenth paragraph of my despatch No. 144 of the 12th instant, seditious notices were posted up at Homs during the night. A number of arrests were effected, and the accused, mostly youths, were sent as prisoners to Damascus.

16. While my personal impression still is that, except in the case of another unsuccessful French offensive, no upheaval need be anticipated at Damascus, I think that a satisfactory liquidation of the present situation will be extremely difficult. Peace by negotiation can only be purchased at a great sacrifice of French prestige. A settlement by war is by no means easy. Even supposing that the difficulties of moving large columns across the waterless regions on the Ezra-Sueida and the Deraa-Bosra Eski Sham lines can be overcome and the mountain successfully entered, there will remain the problem of an inevitable and arduous guerrilla warfare in a sparsely watered mountainous region, every bit of which is well-known to the enemy, who, being desperate, can hardly avoid fighting to the bitter end. Whatever may be the issue of the peace negotiations or the military operations, one result of the present revolt seems certain, namely, that France will, for a considerable time, have to keep in Southern Syria an army of occupation considerably larger than she has had here for the last two years. This revolt, however settled, will have an aftermath of brigandage, tribal unruliness, turbulence among the starving villagers, political agitation among the distressed townsmen.

17. It is, anyhow, earnestly to be hoped that there will be no more insufficient military preparation or offensives with inadequate troops. Another defeat as complete as the last could hardly fail to have grave consequences for France in Syria.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

Enclosure in No. 245.

*Consul Smart to Department of Overseas Trade.*

(O.T. No. 38.)  
Sir,

*Damascus, August 17, 1925.*

IN continuation of correspondence ending with my despatch O.T. No. 20 of the 7th May last regarding agricultural prospects in my consular district, I have the honour to report that the general economic situation has now become much worse than anticipated.

2. The harvest in the Hauran proved to be an almost total failure owing to the lack of rain. Whole villages had to be abandoned by their inhabitants owing to drying up of wells and springs. A commission was sent to investigate the situation and made recommendations for rather inadequate remissions of taxes. However, the Druse revolt inspired the French authorities to grant not only large remissions of taxation, but even considerable subsidies to the Hauranis, in order to encourage them to refuse their co-operation to the rebels. Moreover, a moratorium has been granted to many villages in the Hauran.

3. In the plain of Damascus the lack of water has been unprecedented and the crops are greatly under the average. Moreover, a very severe and unusually late frost at the beginning of April did great damage to the fruit trees, especially the apricot trees, which provide important exports for Damascus, in the form of dried apricots, apricot seeds and apricot paste. The encroachments of the nomads on the cultivated areas east of Damascus have been greater than in previous years owing, no doubt, to the losses suffered by the Bedouin during the severe winter, and the cultivators have lost heavily through the consumption of their produce by tribal herds of camels and flocks of sheep.

4. It had been anticipated that the harvest in the regions of Homs and Hama would be good owing to the heavy late rains. Unfortunately, an insect pest, known as "suneh" in Arabic, is said to have destroyed a considerable portion of the cereal crops in those regions.

5. On the top of these successive disasters came the Druse rebellion, which has had a serious economic repercussion on Damascus. It is the custom of Damascene merchants to make advances to the cultivators on the crops of the Hauran and the Jebel Druse. For the reasons stated above, only a small part of the total advances, reckoned at £T. 100,000 gold, to the Hauran will be recovered this year. About £T. 200,000 gold have been advanced to the Jebel Druse, and, unless peace be quickly made, none of that will be recovered this year.

6. All these new factors have come to aggravate the old permanent causes of weakness, *i.e.*, depreciated paper currency based on the franc, closure of Anatolian, Iraki and Palestinian markets by post-war customs barriers, decline of Damascus local industries owing to their having been supplanted, especially in Egypt, by industries created by war needs in countries having then no access to Damascus, &c. The bazaars are quite inactive, and banks are severely restricting credit and discount operations. At a meeting of merchants under the auspices of the Damascus Chamber of Commerce suggestions were made for a moratorium. However, the leading merchants vigorously opposed a measure so disastrous to Damascus credit. It was finally arranged that a deputation of the chamber should visit the principal bankers and beg them to be lenient at this critical moment in claiming their dues. The vice-president of the chamber told me that the bankers had returned favourable replies to this request. Nevertheless, it is feared that a number of bankruptcies are likely in the near future. Suggestions have been made for a restriction of "superfluous" imports, with a view to correcting the unfavourable trade balance.

7. The present stability of the franc is no doubt temporary. If it is only due to the use of the *masse de manœuvre* at the disposal of the French Government through the Morgan loan, a further fall may presumably be expected when these funds are exhausted. Although the effective currency of Syria is Turkish gold and silver, yet there is, of course, a considerable amount of Syrian paper in circulation, and its

presence in the country is bound to involve disastrous losses in the event of further depreciation of the franc.

8. British exporters doing business with Southern Syria would be well advised to exercise the utmost caution in granting any credit during the present financial stringency and commercial depression at Damascus.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 5273/357/89]

No. 246.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 3.)*

(No. 153. Confidential.)

Sir,  
Damascus, August 25, 1925.

IN continuation of correspondence ending with my despatch No. 151 of the 21st instant regarding the Druse revolt, I have the honour to report that the last three days have been characterised by another panic at Damascus greater even than that described in my despatch No. 144 of the 12th instant.

2. According to reports received by me, mixed Druse-Bedouin bands captured the gendarmerie posts at Hejaneh and Bouweida south-east of Damascus, though M. Aubouard, the French delegate, denies that such is the case. Anyhow, I am inclined to think that attacks, probably successful, were made on those posts, though possibly the enemy retired after their raids.

3. Another band appeared in the neighbourhood of Sahnaya and Ashrafiyeh, and 500 Spahis were sent out to the Meidan (southern) entrance of the town and they were encamped there all yesterday.

4. Another Druse-Bedouin band appeared in the gardens south-east of Damascus, 8 kilom. from the town according to M. Aubouard, who informs me that it has been defeated by three squadrons of Spahis sent against it and is now being pursued. M. Aubouard mentioned to me that there were Transjordanian Bedouin in this band. I was informed from other sources that the Beni Sakhr are co-operating with the Druses.

5. It would appear that certain Nationalist notables of Damascus with a number of horsemen, who issued from the town separately and collected in the gardens outside, co-operated with this Druse-Bedouin band, and there seems really to have been a design to make a raid on the town. No doubt it was hoped that once fighting began in Damascus enough pugnacious elements would be found within the town to cause a general upheaval.

6. I understand that the starting point of this mixed force was Nahja, about 20 miles south-east of Damascus.

7. Fighting of some kind seems to have been taking place around Kisweh. The Red Cross ambulance appears to be going to the Damascus station every evening for wounded.

8. Yesterday barbed-wire entanglements were drawn across the eastern and south-eastern entrances to the town, across the principal square of the city so as to block the approach to the Government buildings, and at other points. M. Aubouard told me that the entanglement in the principal square had been erected owing to a misunderstanding by a subordinate officer and was to be removed. It was, in fact, removed about 8 P.M. yesterday.

9. Almost every quarter was occupied by detachments of French troops yesterday evening, and some mitrailleuses were in evidence.

10. M. Aubouard informed me shortly before 8 P.M. yesterday evening that the Christian and Jewish quarters, where are resident English missionary ladies, were adequately guarded by French troops. He said that there were now 3,800 French troops in the town, and he assured me that there was no danger for British subjects. He repeated a previous assurance, namely, that I would be the first to be warned of any danger.

11. Just before my interview with him I had received a verbatim account of a telephonic conversation of M. Aubouard with the French High Commission at Beirut. M. Aubouard, in reply to an enquiry as to the situation in the town, told his chiefs practically what he told me. This would seem to show that, as I have previously reported, he is so far dealing frankly with me, at least, as far as inevitable military

reticence will permit. In reply to an enquiry from the High Commission, M. Aubouard on the telephone said that Subhi Bey, the President of Syria, had gone to the Lebanon, but that he (M. Aubouard) was in touch with Nasri Bey Bakhkhash, the unpopular Christian Minister of the Interior. I need hardly insist on this characteristic behaviour of this rather pitiful nonentity, who was no doubt gambling at the Sofar Casino while a general panic was reigning at the capital of the State of which he is the nominal President.

12. Finally, M. Aubouard, in his telephonic message, said that he was detaining in the town, with General Michaud's concurrence, some French troops from Beirut on their way to the front.

13. The bazaars, of course, became alarmed again, and towards evening yesterday the merchants began to remove their valuables to their houses. This morning the bazaars were partially closed, but towards noon they began to open more generally.

14. All French officers in local commands have been at their posts all night since the 22nd instant.

15. The Nationalists are undoubtedly working for a revolution here. The plan obviously is that enemy incursions from without are to coincide with a rising in the town. They are counting on assistance from Rikabi Pasha and Transjordanian tribes.

16. An American lady in close contact with the Nationalists was advised by them to pack up her valuables and go to the house of one of her Nationalist friends when the revolt broke out.

17. It is said that Rashid Bey Tali'a, the Druse Minister of the Interior, and later Governor of Aleppo during the Feisalian régime, has returned from his Egyptian exile and is now in the mountain organising the Druses. A number of the mischievous Syrian exiles whom we removed last year from Emir Abdullah's court are said also to have gone to the mountain.

18. I am also informed that the rebels are in communication with the Metaoulis of the Buqa' (see the fifth paragraph of my despatch No. 141 of the 7th instant), and that a cutting of the railway communication with Beirut is being actively planned.

19. I confess that I am astonished by French nervousness. I have been on various scenes of Asiatic disorders, and seldom have I on such occasions observed in the native features of the situation less cause for alarm than in the present trouble. Unfortunately, it is the French themselves who give the signal for alarm. For instance, all this ostentatious and ineffective strewing of barbed wire about the town was in itself enough to make everyone think that the French were thoroughly frightened; and, indeed, there is no doubt that they are afraid. To mention another characteristic instance of their timidity, an Englishman who has recently come here on business from the north met a responsible French official of the delegation, with whom he had been on friendly terms elsewhere. The French official asked him why he was lingering here at such a time and advised him to clear out unless he was detained by urgent business. The Englishman said that he had seen me and that I had told him of the French delegation's promise to warn me of any danger. The French official asked what the delegation could tell me in such an uncertain situation, full of possible danger, which, however, might not mature. The Englishman asked what would be done with the European civilians in case of an upheaval. The French official replied that they would be escorted to Beirut by armoured cars.

20. Although there has not yet been another spectacular feminine exodus, a number of Frenchwomen are quietly slipping off to the coast.

21. I remain convinced that, although the ultimate liquidation of this disastrous rebellion is bound to be extremely difficult, the situation at Damascus can be easily controlled by skilful and resolute handling. The real danger, to my mind, does not lie in Druse and Bedouin hordes or in nationalist revolutionaries, but in French demoralisation. There is evidently no confidence in General Sarrail, and French officials here allow themselves to use extraordinarily abusive language about their chief. Obviously such lack of confidence does not make for a resolute bearing towards a universally hostile population. It requires little knowledge of the East to realise the danger of any irresolution in handling excitable and impressionable Orientals during times of unrest.

22. In view of the present indications of Transjordanian co-operation with the rebels, I venture to renew the warnings contained in the fourth paragraph of my despatch No. 130 of the 27th ultimo and the last part of the fifth paragraph of my despatch No. 137 of the 5th instant. It is being said in Damascus, and by persons not badly informed, that the Government of Transjordania is closing its eyes to the help

given to the rebels by Transjordanian elements. The peculiarly intimate and privileged relations of the Beni Sakhr with Emir Abdullah are notorious. It will be difficult to persuade the French that without his complicity these tribesmen would join the rebels.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

No. 247.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 4.)*  
(No. 39.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, September 4, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"General Michaud replaced by Gamelin, who made his reputation at the battle of the Marne on the Commander-in-chief's staff. Understand this action taken by Paris without consulting High Commissioner."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

No. 248.

*Consul Smart (No. 8) to High Commissioner, Bagdad.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received September 9.)*

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Damascus, September 8, 1925.*

FOUR Nairn cars without passengers, which left Bagdad 7th September without my knowledge and without any escort having been arranged here, were attacked this morning 84 miles from Damascus. Leading car escaped and brought the news to Damascus. French have sent aeroplane and soldiers in two cars to find the missing cars. No British cars should start before escorts are arranged here.

(Repeated to Beirut, No. 5.)

No. 249.

*Consul Smart (No. 10) to High Commissioner, Bagdad.—(Repeated to Foreign Office; Received September 9.)*

(No. 10.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Damascus, September 8, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 8.

All chauffeurs arrived at Damascus stripped, but unwounded, in one of the less damaged cars. Other two cars to be towed in to-morrow under escort.

(Repeated to Beirut, No. 7.)

[E 5450/357/89]

No. 250.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 10.)*

(No. 156.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that I have received from a moderate Nationalist and a member of one of the chief families of Damascus the following account of the unsuccessful offensive against Damascus reported in my despatch No. 153 of the 25th instant, and of Nationalist views regarding the future:—

"The Druses had agreed to attack the town, on the understanding that 500 Damascenes would join them outside. On the day appointed only 100 Damascenes under Colonel Zeki Bey Droubi, Yahia Bey Hayati and members of the Tellou family, joined the Druse-Bedouin force of 1,000 men, which, relying

on the agreement mentioned, had arrived in the gardens immediately south-east of the town. The Druse leaders asked the Damascenes why they had not kept their word and come out 500 strong. While a none too amicable argument was in progress, French aeroplanes appeared on the scene and began to bomb the mixed force. This aerial bombardment was followed by a spahi cavalry charge which put to flight the whole invading force. One of the Tellou family was killed.

This, however, will not be the end of the story. Committees are actively working in the town to bring about concerted action between the Damascenes and the Druses and Bedouin. Unfortunately, certain elements are also negotiating with the Turks. Most Nationalists view Turkish intervention with alarm. They think that Aleppo and Alexandretta, economically ruined by their isolation from their Anatolian markets, would welcome reabsorption into Turkey. Hama, Homs and Damascus would oppose a Turkish occupation, but their resistance would be easily overcome by the Turks. The result of assistance from Turkey would be the renewed subjection of the whole country to Turkish domination, which would be more disastrous than the French.

"In their perplexity the Nationalists would like to turn to England, but they are equally fearful of the results of English intervention. On no account do they want to find themselves overwhelmed by Jews, as their brethren in Palestine. Moreover, England's recent policy towards her old Shereefian allies inspires doubts as to how far she can be trusted to keep to any engagements made.

"In view of these unpleasant prospects, many Nationalists were inclined to think that their best course would be to profit by the present situation to negotiate with the French and obtain substantial concessions."

2. There is no doubt that men's minds at Damascus are being exercised by what is to happen if the French decide to retire to the coastal regions, i.e., to the Lebanon-Alawite rampart. Another leading Nationalist and notable seriously asked me for advice as to what the Arabs should do when the French left Damascus. Among the French themselves I have noticed much depression and uncertainty. A few evenings ago the French delegate, M. Aubouard, evidently worried, spoke to me very gloomily about the situation. He said that he would not be surprised if brigandage were to start on the Damascus-Beirut road. He was uncertain whether the camel corps patrols could be sufficiently ubiquitous to protect the Bagdad routes completely. He spoke dolefully of the French loss of material in the hostilities up to date, and he valued it at 50 million francs. Nothing, he continued, could be recovered from the Druses, who were in possession of little but sterile rocks. The whole system of the mandate, he thought, was costly and unsatisfactory. He concluded by saying that he much regretted his quiet post at Lattaquieh.

3. Of course, M. Aubouard, having never been in the interior before, has the coastal mentality and is probably more easily depressed than are those who, by long inland experience, have become healthily sceptical of Oriental dangers, always threatening but rarely maturing, even in the midst of a hostile, fanatical population and remote from Western succour. But his pessimism seems to be shared by other and older hands. As, from the local factors visible, this pessimism appears to be exaggerated, I cannot help thinking that it is caused by some knowledge of limitations of help from France. I confess that I myself was somewhat disconcerted on hearing from the British liaison officer that the promised reinforcement of a "division" (see the sixth paragraph of my despatch No. 144 of the 12th instant) was turning out to be only about 4,000 men. This force is obviously inadequate.

4. The present French régime in Syria appears to be so unrepresentative of France that its humours are perhaps less significant than might be thought. It is the trend of public opinion in France which would seem to require careful watching during the next few months. If France wants to restore her position in Syria she must have an occupying force of at least 25,000 men for the interior alone. If the French people are not ready to shoulder this military burden there may be some justification for the pessimism of Frenchmen at Damascus.

5. I need hardly insist on our interests in a continued French occupation of Syria. It is not with our present forces in Palestine and Transjordania that we would be able to hold those countries or maintain the Zionist policy, once Damascus was evacuated by France and had become inevitably an imposing centre of attraction to the southern lands from which it was artificially separated. Moreover, all the

Arabian hostility now concentrated against France would be diverted to us, once the French had disappeared from the scene. Whether Turkish or Arabian, Syria without the French would necessitate a reconsideration of our whole policy in these parts. It seems, therefore, that it is greatly to our interest to give all the moral support possible to France in her present difficulties here.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 5451/357/89]

No. 251.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 10.)*(No. 157.)  
Sir,*Damascus, August 29, 1925.*

IN continuation of previous correspondence regarding the Druse rebellion, I have the honour to report that the French authorities have arrested and sent to Rouad Island most of the local Nationalist leaders, including practically the whole of the Administrative Committee of the Party of the People, accused of complicity with the Druse rebels. Dr. Shahbandar, the leader of the party, and several other Nationalist chiefs managed to escape before their arrest could be effected. It is said by some that Dr. Shahbandar has gone to Palestine, but the probability is that he is still somewhere in Syria.

2. On Friday, the 28th instant, the bazaars were closed, and an attempt to demonstrate against these arrests was made at the midday prayer at the Omayad Mosque. One youthful Nationalist harangued the congregation which issued from the mosque in a threatening mass as on the occasion of the Balfour demonstration. This time, however, the demonstrators knew that they could not count on any leniency on the part of the French, and nothing serious happened. In the main bazaar the crowd was met by police and gendarmes. One youthful demonstrator fired a few revolver-shots in the air, and the police, in reply, fired a few shots over the heads of the crowd, which thereupon dispersed. A few arrests were effected.

3. The "Barid-us-Shark," a Nationalist paper, which had just come into existence to take the place of the suppressed "Al Muktabas" (see the fifth and sixth paragraphs of my despatch No. 145 of the 13th instant), has been suppressed on the ground that a newspaper cannot be published when its responsible editor is in prison. The editor of this ephemeral publication was Nejib Rais, one of the Nationalists arrested.

4. The French have thus made a fairly clean sweep of the Nationalist organisation in Damascus. If they could quickly restore order in time to have the elections in October as previously contemplated, they would now have little difficulty in "making" them so as to keep in power the present governmental party. The present impression, however, is that the elections will have to be postponed owing to unlikelihood of an early restoration of order.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

No. 252

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 14.)*(No. 42.)  
(Telegraphic)*Beirut, September 14, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Gamelin arrived to-day and proceeded to Damascus immediately. Situation at Soueida more critical. Rebels now working two captured French guns against citadel; casualties reported."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

[E 5576/357/89]

No. 253.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 16.)*(No. 1998.)  
Sir,*Paris, September 15, 1925.*

YOU will no doubt have observed, from the various despatches which Mr. Phipps has had the honour to address to you recently regarding the revolt in the Jebel Druse and the consequent disturbed situation in Syria, that this question has so far been regarded by the Paris press and by French public opinion in general almost entirely as a personal issue concerning General Sarrail exclusively. The actions of the High Commissioner, his failure to keep the Metropolitan Government adequately informed, his inability to fill his dual office of High Commissioner and Commander-in-chief—all these points have been discussed *ad nauseam*, mainly in the columns of the Nationalist organs, which have not ceased since the first week in August to make the most violent attacks on General Sarrail, making no attempt to conceal their pleasure in being able to revenge themselves upon one of the hated "Rue de Valois" generals. The Left press, too, has treated the question mainly from the personal standpoint, and in defending General Sarrail, who is, of course, *persona gratissima* in Socialist-Radical and Socialist circles, has made it clear that, if the High Commissioner at Beirut is to be made a scapegoat for the French reverses in Syria, then the High Commissioner at Rabat, Marshal Lyautey, must suffer a similar fate as regards recent events in Morocco. Throughout, the Government has remained strangely silent—too silent to suit the wishes of the press—and has contented itself with issuing a few somewhat arid communiqués.

2. No attempt would seem to have been made to judge the situation on wider lines, or to estimate the possibilities of the present situation. This may in part be due to the fact that Parliament is not now sitting, and to the fact that public opinion has been more than occupied by recent events regarding security, inter-Allied debts and Morocco. It is, however, undeniable that the question of the Druse rebellion has hitherto been regarded by the newspapers from a somewhat partisan point of view, and that any criticisms or suggestions which have been made have been destructive rather than constructive in character.

3. I think, therefore, that, at the risk of recapitulation, a further short summary of events up to the present time may be useful.

4. Isolated from the other inhabitants of Syria not only by geographical conditions, but also by their peculiar religious tenets, the Druses are by nature a proud and high-spirited race, to whom external control and authority is irksome. In days gone by the Turks had found them troublesome subjects, and had experienced considerable difficulty in reducing them to subjection. Nor were the Druses, after the war years, during which they had greatly enriched themselves, likely to be more amenable to French rule than they had been to Turkish. It was clear that, unless the Druses were handled with exceptional skill and tact, trouble was almost certainly in store for the French. Unfortunately, however, the manner in which the French authorities dealt with the problem was marked by very little tact and seemingly little foresight.

5. In March 1921 an agreement was drawn up between the French and the Druse notables, laying down the Constitution of the State of the Jebel Druse, included in the French mandatory area in Syria. By this agreement or charter it was expressly stated—in article 3—that a native Governor, elected by the Druses themselves, subject to the approval of the mandatory Power, would be at the head of the Government. For a time this provision was carried out; a native Governor presided over the State and all went well. But when, early in 1923, the then Governor, a member of the Attrache family, fell ill, the French for some reason decided to abandon their previous policy and determined to appoint a French Governor. This policy aroused great opposition amongst the Druses, who, apparently with considerable justification, declare that the French Government has deliberately broken its written pledge.

6. To make matters worse, the French made what appears to have been a most unfortunate choice when selecting the French Governor of the Jebel Druse. Their choice fell upon Captain Carbillot, a young French officer, energetic and keen about his work, but totally incapable of understanding the native psychology, harsh and overbearing to his inferiors and heedless of local sentiment and prejudice. Even M. Painlevé, in a recent interview, was forced to admit that Captain Carbillot had

been *un peu rude* in his dealings with the natives, while the utmost that the Left papers can find to say in his favour is that he was indefatigable in working for the material prosperity of the Jebel Druse, building new roads and improving the water supply. Mr. Consul Smart is unsparing in his criticisms of Captain Carbillot, declaring that he would be more at home in France's North African possessions. If some of the articles which have appeared in the more extreme Nationalist organs are to be credited, the penal colony of French Guiana would seem to be still more suitable. In short, by his actions, Captain Carbillot brought matters in the Jebel Druse, where the situation was already strained owing to the continued refusal of the French to appoint a native Governor, to the breaking-point.

7. In this connection, I would point out that, although Captain Carbillot's appointment as Governor was not officially gazetted till the 3rd December, 1924, he had been acting in this capacity for a considerable period, having been originally nominated to the post by General Weygand. General Sarrail was only appointed High Commissioner on the 29th November, 1924, and did not arrive in Syria till the 2nd January, 1925. Therefore, although he was actually in power at the time of Captain Carbillot's appointment, it would be hardly fair to saddle him with the entire responsibility; nor would it be just to insinuate that Captain Carbillot won his promotion owing to his anti-Clerical and Radical ideas.

8. If Captain Carbillot was unsuccessful in handling the Druses, the higher French authorities were little better. For when, in June last, while Captain Carbillot was on leave, a party of Druse notables went to Beirut to lay their grievances before General Sarrail, the High Commissioner refused to receive them. In consequence, the already existing irritation of the Druse chieftains was greatly increased. Finding that the agitation in the Mountain (Jebel Druse) was growing, the French decided on a policy of wholesale arrest, orders for the arrest of no less than thirty-six sheikhs being issued. The only result was to aggravate the situation. Finally, the French authorities invited six of the most prominent members of the Attrache family to come to Damascus with a view to discussing the whole question in a friendly manner and arriving at a settlement. On reaching Damascus, the chiefs were arrested and placed in confinement.

9. Thus, the main causes for the revolt of the Druses are threefold: (1) The natural tendency of the Druse to resist any external control; (2) the refusal of the French to appoint a native Governor, in spite of their previous pledges and the unsatisfactory way in which they treated the Druse; (3) the manner in which Captain Carbillot fulfilled his duties as Governor.

10. The outbreak was probably actually occasioned by a sudden decision on the part of the Attrache chiefs that matters could not go on as they were, and that it would be advisable to take advantage of the absence of Captain Carbillot on leave.

11. The military events of the rebellion have been fully reported by Mr. Consul Smart and Major Salisbury Jones, and in my despatch No. 1934 of the 5th September I had the honour to transmit a copy of a report from General Clive giving the French War Office account.

12. Hostilities started on the 24th July, when a French column composed of Syrian levies was surprised and lost 100 men. Shortly afterwards Soueida, the capital of the Mountain, was surrounded and the French garrison was besieged in the citadel. In the meantime a punitive column was being concentrated at Ezraa, under General Michaud; this column—about 3,000 strong—advanced towards Soueida on or about the 1st August, but was heavily attacked and had to retreat to Ezraa. The French losses were considerable, and an entire battalion of Malagaches laid down their arms and fled. As a result of this reverse, the investment of Soueida became more severe, while the French were compelled to await the arrival of reinforcements before undertaking any operations on a large scale.

13. Encouraged by their initial successes, the Druses made a daring raid on Damascus on the 24th August, but, thanks to the gallantry of the Spahis and the efficiency of the French aeroplanes, this was driven off with loss. Since this date nothing of any particular note has been reported. The present situation is that the French hold the railway line as far as Deraa, while the garrison at Soueida is still beleaguered. Reinforcements amounting to five battalions, three or four batteries and some tanks are on their way to Syria, but little is likely to happen until they arrive.

14. It is perhaps too early to give any opinion as to the probable outcome of the campaign. Mr. Smart maintains that, if the French local authorities keep their heads, then little difficulty in putting an end to the revolt is to be anticipated; he

adds, however, that the French at Damascus are inclined to exaggerate the danger of the situation. There seems little reason to doubt, however, that, with the arrival of the reinforcements referred to above, the French will be in a position to reduce the Druse to submission, though the difficult nature of the ground and the lack of water complicate the problem.

15. So far, apart from certain alarmist newspaper articles, there has been no rumour of any movement elsewhere in Syria in sympathy with the Druse, and the French War Office has definitely denied the existence of any such movement, and, provided that the French suffer no more reverses, there seems to be no reason to anticipate that any general rising will take place, since the Druse are universally unpopular with the other inhabitants of Syria.

16. It may be of interest to recall that the "Times" of the 17th and 25th August stated that the Druse leaders were prepared to make peace on the basis of the following terms: Recall of Captain Carbillot; a French Governor of the State would be accepted, provided he were elected by the Druse; special Constitution for the Jebel Druse to be drawn up; amnesty for all in revolt to be granted and no Druse arms to be confiscated; evacuation of the Mountain by all French troops; rebuilding of all Druse villages destroyed by French aeroplanes; limiting of French control in the Jebel Druse to five French officers; no restriction on traffic in arms to be imposed.

17. That these rumours of peace negotiations were well-founded was borne out both by M. Laroche and M. Painlevé (see Mr. Phipps's telegrams Nos. 288 and 289). The "Times" of the 28th August, however, reported that the peace negotiations had definitely broken down, and the advances made by the Druse leaders seem to have led to nothing.

18. So much for the situation to date. A word may now be said on certain secondary, though none the less important questions which arise out of the revolt.

19. *French Administration in Syria.*—There can be little doubt that the French administration was itself largely to blame for the outbreak of the revolt, and it cannot be acquitted of responsibility for the initial French disasters. For, having decided on a policy of repression, it failed to make the necessary preparations to carry out this policy and allowed the initiative to pass to the rebels. The first lesson which seems to have been drawn from this is that the present system of administration in Syria, whereby the offices of High Commissioner and Commander-in-chief are filled by the same person, is defective, and General Gamelin (see my despatch No. 1920 of the 4th September) has now been appointed, ostensibly independently of General Sarrail, to command the troops. It is interesting to note that the French Government have at the same time apparently come to a similar conclusion about Morocco and have determined to deprive Marshal Lyautey of his military duties.

20. *Political Situation in France.*—The difficulties which have been experienced in Syria, and the consequent bitter attacks which have been made upon General Sarrail, have an embarrassing effect upon the French Cabinet, and upon the President of the Council in particular. M. Briand, supported by M. Berthelot, is known to be pressing for the recall of the High Commissioner, while M. Painlevé, in his capacity as Minister of War, cannot be too pleased with the manner in which the campaign has been conducted up to the present. On the other hand, any attempt to remove General Sarrail would infuriate the Socialist-Radicals and Socialists, and would tend to throw M. Painlevé further to the Right. The Government is already accused of having utilised the support of the Right to counterbalance the defection of the Socialists over Morocco and the Finance Bill. Such an accusation does not in itself please M. Painlevé, who cannot wish further to alienate the Left by recalling General Sarrail. Yet he is responsible for the adequate defence of French interests in Syria, and he is being told on all sides that such a defence is impossible as long as General Sarrail remains. Hence M. Painlevé's dilemma. It may be that the difficulty will be solved by recalling both General Sarrail and Marshal Lyautey, a policy which would anger both the Left and the Right and please neither. Or perhaps the problem will be solved by allowing both High Commissioners to remain at their posts, but with purely civilian functions. This seems the more probable solution at the moment.

21. *Finance.*—Coming at a time when the sorely tried French Treasury was already severely strained by the necessity of meeting unexpected demands caused by the war in Morocco, the revolt in Syria must be a source of considerable embarrassment from the financial point of view. No information is available regarding the estimated cost of suppressing the rebellion, nor regarding the manner in which this

money will be found. In view of the fact that reinforcements have had to be sent all the way from Marseilles, it is clear that very considerable expenditure must have been caused. It is, I understand, probable that a Bill allotting the necessary credits will be presented to the Chamber on the reassembly of Parliament.

22 *Effect of the Revolt upon His Majesty's Government.*—The Jebel Druse marches with Transjordania, and the revolt was therefore bound in any event to interest His Majesty's Government in its capacity as a neutral neighbour State. But owing to the peculiar circumstances, the rebellion has a deeper effect on British interests. During the latter part of the 19th century the Druses obtained some support from British subjects in their struggles against their Turkish masters, and His Majesty's Government have since been considered, for no apparent reason, to harbour a secret sympathy for the Druses. Furthermore, British policy in Arabia has of course since the war been a constant object of suspicion to the French. In every petty disturbance, in every minor quarrel, the French press have seen the shadow of the pan-Arab movement and behind the pan-Arab they have discerned His Majesty's Government—the phantom "cavalerie de St. George" galloping across the sands of Arabia. Thus the French—and not only the French authorities in Syria but also public opinion at home—had acquired a frame of mind which made it only too easy for them to break out into a violent anti-British attitude if they were given any excuse. It was thus essential that no such opportunity should be afforded to them.

23. Fortunately, from the outset the British authorities were able effectively to patrol the frontier and to prevent rebels in any large numbers crossing over into British territory, using it as a refuge from which to emerge later. The only serious occurrence took place on the 24th August, when it was reported that 700 mounted tribesmen had crossed the Transjordania frontier in order to join the Druses. No confirmation of the incident was forthcoming, however, and the matter has never been referred to in the Paris press.

24. As you will recollect, the President of the Council has on more than one occasion expressed his warm appreciation of the sympathetic attitude taken up by the British officials in Transjordania, and with the exception of a few articles at the beginning of the outbreak no attacks have been made on Great Britain in the press.

25. Thus the danger that the Druse revolt might be the cause of Franco-British dissension in Syria would seem to have been averted. It would, however, be a mistake to assume that His Majesty's Government's interest in the matter ends with their obligation to keep the frontier closed. Great Britain, as a mandatory Power in the Near East, can hardly fail to be affected by the events in the French zone. Anything which would tend to decrease French prestige or augment the power of the native parties in Syria would be bound to have a harmful reaction, not necessarily direct but nevertheless tangible, upon the situation in Palestine, Transjordania and Irak. Thus the future tranquillity of the areas under British mandate depends very closely upon the success of the French in dealing with any disturbances in Syria.

26. *Position of League of Nations.*—There remains one aspect of the question which I have not seen alluded to in any newspaper article, either French or British; that is, the attitude likely to be adopted by the League of Nations in the matter. There is a natural tendency in France to regard Syria more in the light of a colony or protectorate than as a mandated territory, and little or no differentiation is made on these grounds between the affairs of the Druse and those of Morocco.

27. It may be remembered that after the Bondelzwart Hottentot rebellion in what was formerly German South-West Africa, the League of Nations summoned the Union of South Africa, the mandatory Power in question, to give an account of its stewardship. There is nothing, presumably, to prevent the League taking similar action in the present case, and I observe from Mr. Smart's despatch No. 146 that this possibility—remote and improbable though it may be—has not escaped the notice of the Palestine Druses.

I have, &c.  
ERIC PHIPPS.

No. 254.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received September 18.)  
(No. 44.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, September 18, 1925.

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"One battalion and one squadron of foreign legion strongly attacked yesterday at Museifire, 13 miles south-west of Soueda. Engagement lasted from 4 till 10 A.M. Rebels then withdrew. High Commissioner informs me that rebels left 200 dead on the field. French casualties [? group omitted], but understand squadron lost heavily."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

[E 5698/357/89]

No 255.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received September 21.)  
(No. 164.)

Sir,  
Damascus, September 7, 1925.

WITH reference to previous correspondence regarding the Druse rebellion, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation of an estimate of the Druse forces supplied to me by a native informant, who should be in a position to obtain local information. Native figures are, of course, notoriously untrustworthy, and I cannot in any way vouch for the accuracy of this information. It is noteworthy, however, that, while the machine-gun figures appear to be exaggerated, the estimates of the Druse numbers and artillery are quite conservative.

2. Supposing that this information represents any approximation to fact, an examination of the map seems to show that the Druse forces are disposed as if offensives were expected in the following three quarters:—

- (1.) From Kisweh by the direct track to the north-east of the mountain.
- (2.) From Ezra by the motor road to Sueida (main offensive).
- (3.) From Bosra Eski Sham into the south of the mountain.

3. As the Druses, owing to a very general native complicity, must be well informed of French military movements, it may be that this order of battle represents the conclusions they have drawn from these movements since the gradual arrival of reinforcements.

4. Quite rightly the French military authorities here preserve complete silence as to their intentions. Presumably no offensive will now take place before the arrival of General Gamelin, unless General Michaud is tempted to make an effort to redeem his reputation by precipitating operations before the arrival of his successor.

5. It is not altogether impossible that an offensive may be retarded in the hope that continued and intensified aerial bombardments of the villages in the mountain may inconvenience the Druses sufficiently to induce them to make peace on conditions which it would not be impossible to accept. There can be no doubt that the population of the mountain has suffered appreciable loss in lives and property from the aerial bombardments with the limited aeroplanes hitherto available. Now that new air squadrons have come from France, this aerial action could presumably be intensified without much difficulty. Recently a heavy aerial bombardment of the town of Sueida was effected in retaliation for a Druse night attack on the citadel, during which one of the French officers of the garrison was killed.

6. Already it is reported that members of the Halabeyyeh and 'Awamereh families, between which and the Attrash family there has always been rivalry, have got into communication with the French authorities in order to reopen peace negotiations. It is said that the French authorities refused to listen to these overtures. It is a well-known feature of Druse policy to feign differences and keep elements on both sides of the fence, so as to mitigate the results of any discomfiture. Perhaps, therefore, the French had good reason to doubt the genuineness of these advances.

7. There are now some ex-Turkish officers from Damascus in the Jebel Druse and doctors are also said to have gone there from Damascus. It is even rumoured that Dr. Shahbandar, the fugitive Nationalist leader (see the first paragraph of my despatch No. 157 of the 29th ultimo), contemplates organising hospital arrangements in the mountain.

8. Druse bands have again been operating against villages in the neighbourhood of Damascus and of Kuneitra. Acts of violence and robberies in the countryside by miscellaneous brigands are fairly frequent. Efforts are being multiplied by the Druses to seduce the inhabitants of the Hauran and the Wadi-al-Ajam, with hitherto very partial success. The French recently bombarded several villages in the Wadi-al-Ajam suspected of being rebel meeting places. There have also been conflicts between the Christians and the Druses in that region. On the other hand, it appears unlikely that the French can count on much native co-operation in the Hauran or elsewhere. Amir Said Jezairli tells me that Mahmud Faour, chief of the Fadl tribe of the Jaujan, in reply to a French invitation, said that he would maintain order in his district, but that he could not violate tribal tradition by co-operating against the Druses.

9. In Damascus the French, since the arrival of the latest reinforcements and the arrest of the Nationalist leaders (see my despatch No. 157 of the 29th ultimo), appear to have nothing to fear for the moment from native outbreaks. Immediately after the demonstration reported in my above-mentioned despatch, orders were issued prohibiting circulation after 8 P.M. in the Meydan and Shaghour quarters (see the seventh paragraph of my despatch No. 144 of the 12th ultimo), but this interdiction was removed after a couple of days. On Friday, the 4th instant, a feminine demonstration was made against the French and was organised for the issue from the Midday Prayer at the Omayad Mosque. Presumably women were selected for this purpose as being protected by their sex from vigorous treatment. However, the demonstration failed to mature, although some of the bazaars closed in anticipation of trouble. It may be said that the present situation in the town is as tranquil as possible at such a time, in spite of periodical alarms and exaggerated barbed wire defences at the southern and south-eastern entrances of the town. Generally, in Southern Syria the Druses can hardly for the moment count on important accessions of native allies, as the increase in the French military strength should be sufficient to inspire prudence in hesitating elements. I gather from the British liaison officer that the total strength of the French army in Syria and the Lebanon is now about 25,000 men and that no further reinforcements are expected in the near future. Of this force some 5,000 Malagaches and Syrian legionaries can be regarded as useless for fighting purposes. The remainder seems to be inadequate for a general restoration of order (see the fourth paragraph of my despatch No. 156 for the minimum requirements in my opinion). Of course, if favoured by luck and by a restoration of *moral* under the auspices of General Gamelin, the French may be able to extricate themselves from their present difficulties. But any hitch or new development, such as intensified Turkish Chettah action in the north, would seriously compromise France's position in Syria. In short, I think that considerable risk is being taken by this failure to increase adequately the French forces in the country.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

Enclosure in No. 255.

*Druse Order of Battle.*

		Men	Guns.	Machine Guns.
Um-el-Romman	..	500	..	6
Debeen..	..	400	1	6
Butta	..	500	..	4
Kurieyeh	..	700	..	8
El Jamr	..	500	..	6
Ureh ..	..	500	..	6
Risas ..	..	400	2	6
Suweida	..	2,500	2	6
El Mazraa	..	2,500	..	4
Shehba	..	1,500	..	4
Um Zeitoun	..	1,000	..	4
Walgha	..	500	..	4
		11,500	5	64

Three hundred Damascenes, mostly horsemen, have joined the Druses.

[E 5709/357/89]

No. 256.

*Consul-General Satow to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 22.)*

(No. 119. Confidential.)

Sir,

*Beirut, September 8, 1925.*

IT was inevitable when the trouble in the Jebel Druse broke out that we, in view of our past traditional friendship with the Druses, should be considered by many, if not actually to be assisting the Druses, at any rate to be viewing their activities with a benevolent eye. Such suggestions were all the more likely to find a fertile soil in the minds of the French, as it is always pleasant to be able to attribute the result of one's own mistakes to the faults of others. Further, the French have a deep-rooted suspicion both of the Emir Abdullah and of Rikabi, his Prime Minister.

2. Both the liaison officer and I have done our best to dispel these suspicions. The former, being in close touch with the military authorities on both sides and having recently made a special journey to Palestine, in the course of which he was able to see with his own eyes what was being done in Transjordania to prevent Arabs from crossing thence into Syria, is naturally in the best position to persuade the French that we are doing all that can reasonably be expected of us. I myself have lost no opportunity of seconding his efforts. I have been able to inform General Sarrail that, while an emissary from Sultan Pasha Attrash did indeed go to Amman to ask advice from the Emir Abdullah, the advice which was, by the direction of the Acting High Commissioner, given to him was such that it could only be fully approved by the French. I have also informed General Sarrail that, while certain Arabs were able to get over the frontier, the numbers of those doing this had been much exaggerated; that they were mainly of the Roalla tribe, which has sections in both the French and British zones; and that stringent measures, which included authority to fire on persons knowingly disregarding the order that the passage of the frontier is forbidden, had been taken to prevent a repetition of the incident.

3. Knowing also how quickly reports get around and how exaggerated they become in the process, I thought it well to tell the general that it had come to my knowledge that an Englishman living in a Druse district in the Lebanon had been criticising most indiscreetly and improperly the action not only of the French Government but also of His Majesty's Government in respect to the Jebel Druse rising. I told him that I had written severely to the offender, and that I hoped he would refrain from similar indiscretions in the future. As I happened recently, by accident, to have visited in the Lebanon a Druse lady named Sit Nazira Jumblat, who is a person of some influence in Druse circles, I thought it well also to mention this to General Sarrail. I believe that the latter's suspicions, such as he had, have been calmed and that he is convinced that we are doing all we can. But even so level-headed a man as General Weygand had periods when he seemed to believe almost anything that was told him. In these circumstances General Sarrail may easily later on be led to believe that we are not really doing our best. If such is the case, it will be regrettable, but cannot be helped.

4. The recall of General Michaud and his replacement by General Gamelin is considered to be a severe blow to General Sarrail. It appears to be correct that the change was made without consulting the High Commissioner, who has persisted in regarding General Michaud as an officer of merit. As to the wisdom of the change there can be no doubt. To have resumed operations under General Michaud, in whom confidence was no longer felt by his subordinates, would have been to court disaster.

5. A local paper recently published a surprisingly frank leading article, in which it attempted to point a moral from various unfortunate events of differing importance which have occurred since January last. The moral was that in countries such as Syria and the Lebanon things go all right so long as discipline is maintained. And discipline can easily be maintained so long as those in charge know how to make themselves respected. The trouble under the present régime has been that respect for established authority and for those in charge of the administration has for various reasons diminished. The change of generals, which should have been brought about by the High Commissioner, but has actually taken place without his views being ascertained, must inevitably tend still further to diminish his prestige and authority here.

I have, &c.

H. E. SATOW.

No. 257.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 25)*

(No. 14.)

(Telegraphic.) *En clair.*

FRENCH troops advancing relieved Soueida yesterday.

Damascus, September 25, 1925.

[E 5951/357/89]

No. 258.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 1.)*

(No. 177.)

Sir,

Damascus, September 18, 1925.

IN continuation of correspondence ending with my despatch No. 164 of the 7th instant regarding the Druse rebellion, I have the honour to report that the last ten days have been characterised by intensive Druse action in the Wadi-al-Ajam, by skirmishing between the railway and the mountain, and by a marked change in native and French opinion, which, formerly sceptical, now anticipates a French victory.

2. In the Wadi-al-Ajam, which has many villages inhabited by a mixed Druse-Christian population, Druse bands have from Majdal-as-Shams, south of Mount Hermon, and at Ain-as-Shaareh and Kalaat Jandal on the western slopes of Mount Hermon, practically driven out all the Christians, after a severe armed conflict in the case of Kalaat Jandal. A French force recently went out under General Soulé but returned without doing anything effective. According to the Christians, the general was deceived by Moslem and Druse headmen into believing that no further trouble need be expected. On the contrary, the trouble has been much more acute since the return of the force to Damascus. Indeed, the raiding is almost assuming the proportions of an offensive, and shows signs of spreading into the Wadiittaim and round Mount Hermon towards Hasbeya from Rasheya, that is to say, into the Druse-peopled territory annexed from Damascus to form the "Grand Liban." All this Druse action in the Wadi-al-Ajam is obviously designed to create a diversion and draw off French troops from the offensive against the mountain. I understand that troops have been or are being sent again to the Wadi-al-Ajam, where the native gendarmerie posts have been reduced to virtual impotence.

3. It would seem that most of the Nationalist refugees from Damascus (see the first paragraph of my despatch No. 157 of the 29th ultimo) have made their way either to the Jebel Druse or to Transjordania. There have been many reports of the formation of a Provisional National Government in the mountain under the direction of these political refugees, but no certain details of such a move are yet available.

4. The ex-officers of the Turkish army from Damascus are playing a considerable part in the direction of Druse operations. A council of war is said to have been held recently between these officers and the Druse chiefs with a view to devising plans for action after the probable success of the coming French offensive. According to this report, the conference agreed on intensive action of bands from Al Safa as their base. M. Aubouard, the French delegate, told me to-day that, after the Jebel Druse had been reoccupied, Al Safa was to be heavily bombed from the air with a view to the destruction of the nest of brigands who from there have been raiding the Bagdad road. It would, in that eventuality, hardly seem a healthy region for a base of raiding bands.

5. Meanwhile, skirmishes have been taking place between the railway and the mountain. A slight one was reported between Druses and French troops at Kharba, about 20 miles from Ezra on the road to Soueida. Both sides claim the victory.

6. A more serious skirmish took place at Musaifireh, south-west of Soueida, and, though the French claim the victory, it seems more probable that the advantage rested with the Druses.

7. The most extensive conflict is reported to have taken place on the 13th instant, when a French force advancing from Ezra, either for raiding or reconnoitring purposes, was attacked by Druse cavalry, reinforced as the fighting proceeded. Aeroplanes appeared on the scene and apparently succeeded in extricating the French force from an unpleasant position.

8. Soueida is now subjected to artillery fire, but apparently the enemy gunners are very indifferent. However, the position of the garrison must be rather precarious, and it is to be hoped that, General Gamelin having arrived at Damascus and taken command of the French army, operations for the relief of Soueida will not be long delayed. I understood from M. Aubouard to-day that the offensive would start "in two or three days."

9. There is no doubt that the heavy aerial bombardments of the last month have greatly influenced the situation in favour of the French. The Druses have been disheartened by their material losses, and many disaffected elements elsewhere have been discouraged from joining in the fray by the fear of air reprisals. The reinforcements, though perilously close to the line of inadequacy, have already produced a considerable moral effect. Native opinion, hitherto sceptical of French chances of success, is veering round to the belief that the troops now concentrated on the front are sufficiently strong to penetrate into the mountain, though prolonged guerilla warfare, retarding the restoration of order in Southern Syria, is contemplated as not at all unlikely. I have also during the last week noticed a change of feeling among the French, whose long depression appears to have been succeeded by considerable optimism.

I have, &amp;c.

W. A. SMART.

No. 259.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 6.)*

(No. 16.)

(Telegraphic.) *Code.*

Damascus, October 6, 1925.

REVOLT broke out at Hama 4th October. Some Government buildings burnt and town in possession of rebels until yesterday (Monday) morning, when French reinforcements fought their way into the town.

(Sent to Bagdad, No. 19, and Jerusalem, No. 4.)

[E 6099/346/89]

No. 260.

*Consul-General Satow to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 7.)*

(No. 125.)

Sir,

Beirut, September 23, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to report that within the last two or three months the concession held by the Damas-Hama et Prolongements Railway Company, commonly known as the D.H.P., has been overhauled and in some respects modified. One of the main alterations made seems to be that, as regards future lines built by the company in Syria and the Lebanon, a joint kilometric guarantee will be given by the three States, Great Lebanon, Alaouites and Syria, into which the territory under French mandate has been divided. Considerable difficulty has been encountered in getting the State of Syria to agree to this. The only new line of which the construction seems likely to be undertaken for the present is the coastal line from Tripoli to Beirut and onwards to the Palestine frontier. This, of course, will lie entirely within the territory of the Great Lebanon, and the Syrian representative argued that, in the circumstances, the matter was no concern of his State and interested only the Great Lebanon. With difficulty he seems to have been brought to see that if the D.H.P. later decides to build a line entirely within Syrian territory, such as, for example, a line from Aleppo or Homs to Dair-ez-Zor, it will be advantageous to Syria that the Great Lebanon shall bear its share of the kilometric guarantee which will have to be given.

2. In the circumstances there are four parties whose acceptance of the D.H.P. Company's modified concession is required. They are, the company itself and the Governments of the Great Lebanon, of the Alaouites and of Syria. The first three have definitely signified in writing their consent to the new conditions, while the representative of the fourth party, Subhi Bey Barakat, has initialled the agreement and is expected within the next few days to affix his signature.

3. The immediate interest of the foregoing lies in its bearing on the question of the building of the projected Tripoli-Beirut-Ras Nakura line, for which, as will

be seen from correspondence ending with Foreign Office despatch No. 141 of the 13th October, 1924, the preliminary surveys have already been made. I understand that, as soon as the President of the Syrian State has signed the revised concession of the D.H.P. Railway, the company will, in all probability, apply for authority to build the line.

4. The new capital required will be between 220 and 250 million francs. It will be necessary to obtain the consent of the French Government for the use of this capital abroad, but no difficulty is apparently anticipated in this respect. The Quai d'Orsay is said to be anxious, and, indeed, to have laid down that the new line should be built.

5. Once the preliminary arrangements as regards capital, and so on, have been concluded, work will be begun. It is estimated that the time required will be about two years. The first part of the new line to be built will be the Tripoli-Beirut section, the railway company, which also owns the port of Beirut, being anxious to increase the movement of imports and exports through it.

6. The foregoing information is derived from Captain Vallon, acting adviser for public works to the French High Commission, and was acquired at a meeting at which I acted as interpreter between him and Colonel Holmes, general manager of the Palestine railways, and Mr. Anthony, who has been sent out by the Colonial Office to report on railways in general in this part of the world, with special reference to the French scheme of a coastal line. The impression I gained from the interview was that the French authorities seriously intend to put through the scheme.

I have, &c.  
H. E. SATOW.

[E 6214/357/89]

No. 261.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 12.)*

(No. 188.)  
Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 177 of the 18th instant and my telegram No. 14 of the 25th instant, I have the honour to report that on the night of the 16th-17th instant a considerable Druse force made another and much more determined attack on the French position at Musaifireh (see paragraph 6 of my above-mentioned despatch). The attack was repulsed with heavy Druse losses.

2. No doubt this attack was made with a view to anticipating the French concentration at Musaifireh for the advance on Sueida.

3. On the 22nd instant a French column, about 8,000 strong, under General Gamelin, advanced from Musaifireh and reached Sueida on the 24th instant, without serious opposition. After burning the town and withdrawing the French garrison, the column returned to Musaifireh. The lack of water at Sueida made it impossible for the army to remain there.

4. Major Salisbury-Jones, who accompanied General Gamelin, will no doubt report more fully on this military episode. I will content myself with indicating its effect at Damascus.

5. A communiqué was issued by the Bureau de la Presse to the effect that the first part of the French military plan, namely, the rescue of the Sueida garrison, had been successfully accomplished. Owing to lack of water at Sueida and as prearranged, the whole force had returned to Musaifireh, whence would shortly be carried out the second part of the above-mentioned plan.

6. I fear that the natives, ever ready to see the worst of the French position, are inclined to regard this communiqué as cloaking a French failure. The advance on Sueida was unfortunately heralded rather bombastically by the semi-official paper the "Syrie," and generally the French and pro-French elements at Damascus proclaimed it as the beginning of the end. This rather tame conclusion of an operation so loudly celebrated has naturally encouraged the native belief in French impotence as far as any decisive action against the mountain itself is concerned. It is widely held that the Druses will shortly let loose bands all over the country and continue to defy successfully any attempt to occupy their mountain fastnesses.

7. The problem is mainly military, and I am not competent to express an opinion on the subject. From what Major Salisbury-Jones told me on his return from the front, I presume that "the second part of the plan," referred to in the above-mentioned communiqué, is to be a series of advances on various mountain

strongholds, accompanied by destructive action and ending in retirements to the base at Musaifireh. Such retirements are apparently inevitable owing to the impossibility of keeping a large force in regions scantily supplied with water, which has further been diminished by deliberate destruction by the Druses. No doubt aerial action will continue independently of such expeditions.

8. Obviously, the position of the Druses is very unpleasant and will tend to become more so. Unless they make peace soon, the ploughing season will pass and they will be faced with a complete lack of cereals next year. Moreover, their homes are rapidly being destroyed, and their prospects for the approaching winter are far from cheerful. In such circumstances, it seems possible that there may be considerable defections, which would greatly facilitate the task of the French.

9. The prolongation of resistance in the mountain will of course involve an equal prolongation of the disorders in other parts of Southern Syria. A few days ago the railway line was damaged 41 kilom. south of Damascus, and further destructions of the line are quite possible. In the Wadi-al-Ajam (see the second paragraph of my above-mentioned despatch) the situation has improved, and a formal reconciliation has taken place between Druse and Christian headmen. But on the whole it is no exaggeration to say that, except on the Damascus-Beirut road and railway line, insecurity is general in Southern Syria, even in the immediate neighbourhood of Damascus.

10. The danger of the prolongation of this unsatisfactory situation is that complications may occur elsewhere and render necessary the diversion of troops to other points of menace. As the French forces now facing the mountain and covering Damascus are barely adequate for the purpose, it is obvious that any considerable withdrawal to deal with troubles in other parts of Syria might have disastrous effects. Moreover, the gravity of the economic situation, increasing with a continuation of the present disorder, will naturally tend to create unrest and that desperation which drives men to brigandage and other forms of violence.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

[E 6236/357/89]

No. 262.

*Consul-General Satow to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 13.)*

(No. 127.)  
Sir,

Beirut, October 2, 1925.  
I HAVE the honour to report that this year the feast of the Prophet's birthday was celebrated by the local Moslems with what seemed to me to be unusual noise. The Moslem element being a minority here and the Christian elements now being able to celebrate their many and varied festivals with a freedom to which they were unaccustomed in the time of the Turks, the Moslems in self-defence naturally do their best to give to the "Mevlud" and its celebration an importance which it used not to have in earlier days.

2. One feature of yesterday's celebration was a noisy procession of young Moslems who carried flags bearing inscriptions of a religious nature. It was first reported that they carried the Egyptian and Afghan flags, but this proved not to be the case. It is worthy of notice that no effort was apparently made to display the Turkish flag.

3. General Sarrail, the Governor of the Lebanon, and certain other officials and notables attended at the El Omari Mosque, where a speech was made which was followed by the distribution of sweetmeats. The Turkish consul-general did not attend. It appears that he was invited to go, but to wear a fez and not a hat. He said that he would go in a hat, but was warned that if he did so he would be insulted. Having apparently learned that some hostile demonstration was really intended, he in the end decided to stay away. It is stated that neither the French nor the Lebanese flags were displayed at the mosque.

4. For a day or two before the feast the Moslems had been rather on the alert. A Christian had been killed by a Moslem in the Mezraa quarter near the sand dunes in a dispute about some land, and the Christians of that quarter, who have a reputation for turbulence, were rumoured to be preparing to take vengeance. The Moslems of the Basta quarter prepared for some sort of attack and are said to have had ready not only rifles, but bombs. Nothing, however, actually happened. Yesterday another small incident happened in the Mezraa quarter. A Christian quarrelled with a Druse

baker and ended by shooting him. Thereupon a number of armed Druses appeared with the intention of making trouble for the Christians. The authorities hurried up a force of police with, it is said, machine guns and order was maintained. On the incident becoming known in the town there was the beginning of a panic and a certain number of shops were shut.

5. There is certainly a good deal of nervousness abroad at present in Beirut. It seems to be beyond doubt that there are many hundreds of rifles and revolvers in the Moslem quarters and bombs as well, while the Christians must also possess arms in some quantity. The French might before disarming the Jebel Druse tackle the question of disarming Beirut. I imagine that they are unlikely to attempt to do so, as not only would such a course be unpopular, but it would also be very difficult in the Moslem houses.

I have, &c.  
H. E. SATOW.

No. 263.

*Consul, Damascus, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 14.)*

(No. 17.)

(Telegraphic.) *Code.*

*Damascus, October 13, 1925.*

IN view of prolongation of rebellion, spreading of bands and attacks all over the country, including immediate vicinity of Damascus and Beirut road, British travellers should be warned that all Southern and Central Syria is for the present unsafe and that they come here at their own risk. If they must come they should be advised to travel by day and by train which is militarily guarded.

In view of importance of not weakening *moral* of [? French authority], I hope warning will be conveyed [group undecypherable] discreetly as possible.

(Sent to Bagdad, No. 20; Jerusalem, No. 8; Beirut, No. 14; and Aleppo. Sent by post to Cairo, Constantinople and Amman.)

No. 264.

*Acting Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 14.)*

(No. 50.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, October 14, 1925.*

REFERENCE to telegram No. 17 of 13th October from consul, Damascus, to you.

Road in Great Lebanon remains so far reasonably safe.

(Sent to Bagdad, No. 52; Jerusalem, No. 11; Damascus, No. 7; and Aleppo. No. 2. Sent by post to Cairo, Constantinople and Amman.)

[E 6390/357/89]

No. 265.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 19.)*

(No. 192.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that the birthday of the Prophet was celebrated this year at Damascus on the 30th ultimo with very noticeable emphasis. The public offices and bazaars were closed, the streets were profusely decorated and frequently blocked by enthusiastic processions.

2. The French authorities, in conformity with General Sarrail's policy of showing excessive deference to the Moslems, were effusive in their manifestations of sympathy with the Moslems on the occasion of this Mahometan festival.

3. In the evening the processions, swollen with elements from the turbulent Shaghour and Meydan quarters, became offensive. Cries of "Down with Sarrail!" "Down with the French!" "Long live Dr. Shahbender!" "Long live Independence!" &c., soon left no doubt of the anti-French bias of the demonstrators, who in their enthusiasm began to fire rifle and revolver shots in the air, although this form of jubilation had

been expressly forbidden by the police. Two French North African soldiers, who happened to be in the line of march, were badly handled and one of them wounded. Two natives were wounded by stray bullets. The demonstrators then crossed the principal square of the town and thronged threateningly before the Serai and other Government buildings, which were prudently abandoned to their fate by the chiefs of police and gendarmerie, who retired to a neighbouring hotel. The subordinate police officers seem, however, to have behaved with considerable tact and managed to get the crowd to move on to the broader avenues leading to the Hedjaz Railway Station. There, without opposition, they pulled down from the Government printing office its frontal decorations, including the Syrian flags, which have the Tricolour in one corner. After that they dispersed with much murmuring, but, fortunately, little actual violence.

4. On the next day the French semi-official paper, the "Syrie," published an official communiqué to the effect that the birthday of the Prophet had been celebrated without incident both at Beirut and Damascus. On the same date the Damascus Arabic papers published full details of the demonstration, announcing the arrests effected, about half-a-dozen in all.

5. This ostrich-like policy of the present French High Commissioner is of course dictated by the desire to keep the European public in ignorance of what is really happening. After sacrificing France's traditional friendship with the Christians to the will-o'-the-wisp of Moslem sympathy, General Sarrail doubtless would not like the French public to know that this policy had so signally failed that both its author and France were publicly reviled by a Moslem crowd celebrating the birthday of Mahomet in the capital of Syria.

6. This policy of subserviency to the Moslems has inspired the latter with no affection for France but rather with contempt for the French, whose undignified advances are regarded as signs of weakness.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

[E 6391/357/89]

No. 266.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 19.)*

(No. 194.)

Sir,

*Damascus, October 5, 1925.*

IN view of the frequent French communiqués issued at Damascus, Beirut and Paris, reporting that all is quiet at Damascus, I thought it might be of interest to extract, by way of example, a series of reports of brigandage and disorder published in one single number of the Damascus newspaper, the "Zeman." This paper is subsidised by the French and is unlikely to emphasise unduly any information unpalatable to them. I have the honour to enclose literal translations of these extracts, all of which appeared in the section daily devoted to "Local Events," of the "Zeman" of the 4th instant.\*

2. The acts of violence and disorder mentioned in these extracts show that the general insecurity is not only widespread, but also encroaches on the borders of the very city of Damascus.

3. With reference to the last extract and to the ninth paragraph of my despatch No. 188 of the 29th ultimo, the situation in the Wadi-al-Ajam is almost fantastic. After the "reconciliation" of the Druse and Christian headmen, a number of the Christian refugees returned from Damascus to their villages. Almost immediately the Druses attacked them in the village of Ain Asshaara, plundered the church, and forced them to seek safety again in flight. The French appear to leave the district entirely to the care of the Syrian authorities and gendarmerie, who are both luke-warm and impotent. Two hundred French troops would probably suffice to restore order, if they were sent to the Wadi-al-Ajam with a capable political officer. In the absence of such a force, a "tribal peace," without sanctions, is negotiated in a non-tribal district and after a number of Christians and even one gendarme have been killed. The French authorities allow this denial of justice and precarious peace arrangement to be effected without their intervention. When this "tribal peace" is broken, the French authorities, in reply to further representations by the

\* Not printed.

Christians, are said to have declared that they would send troops to the Wadi-al-Ajam after they had finished with the Jebel Druse.

4. A similar attitude of abstention characterises the French attitude in other regions. For instance, in the Anti-Lebanon, just outside Damascus, the Moslem village of Rankous and the Christian village of Seydnaya, the latter being the seat of an important Greek Orthodox convent, have recently been engaging in hostilities, with, naturally, casualties on both sides. Finally, a "tribal peace" was made between them without the French having shown any sign of interest in either the conflict or its unorthodox conclusion in a non-tribal district.

5. Of course, the danger of a dispersion of French troops is evident. But I can hardly believe that the French could not spare a small mobile column for police work outside the actual theatre of war. I think that the difficulty at present is one of divided authority. The theatre of war and the army's line of communications to Damascus are under martial law and the troops under the sole command of General Gamelin. For the rest of the country, the responsible and civilian delegate at Damascus can only ask General Gamelin for military units to assist in maintaining order. Naturally, the general, whose only preoccupation is the suppression of the Druse rebellion, is not inclined to detach from his hardly adequate army special units for service in regions not immediately affecting his military task. In nine cases out of ten he probably refuses such civilian requests. The delegate is thus bound to rely on the native gendarmerie, which is useless at such a juncture. The delegation itself admits that it is kept in complete ignorance of the military situation by the military authorities.

6. I am inclined to think that the only way out of this unsatisfactory situation is to supersede the civilian delegate temporarily by a soldier responsible both for the army in the field and the maintenance of order in the State. Once the military authorities were saddled with this responsibility, I have little doubt that, while sacrificing nothing essential to the concentration on the front, they would, in cases like that of the Wadi-al-Ajam, find the modest force required to go out and restore order there. Southern Syria is now virtually in a state of war, and conditions call for a military rather than a civilian direction of the State. If these disorders are allowed to continue, they may, at given points, reach such dimensions as to constitute a military peril. It would seem, therefore, that a change as indicated above is in the interest of the army's safety in the field. Probably, however, General Sarrail, in pursuance of the ostrich-like policy referred to in the fifth paragraph of my despatch No. 192 of the 4th instant, will shrink from adopting resolute measures of this kind, which would inconveniently emphasise the troubled state of Southern Syria after nine months of his régime.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

No. 267.

*Acting Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 20.)*

(No. 52.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Beirut, October 19, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from consular officer at Damascus by telephone:—

"Rioters, aided by small outside elements, in possession of certain quarters of Damascus, including British consulate quarter. Rioters friendly and no danger anticipated to British life and property except from stray shots. Consulate isolated except by telephone."

"French firing on rebel quarter, and say that they will restore order immediately."

(Sent to Bagdad and Jerusalem.)

[E 6440/357/89]

No. 268.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 21.)*

(No. 204.)

Sir,

*Damascus, October 10, 1925.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 194 of the 5th instant, I have the honour to report that the disorders in the vicinity of Damascus have greatly increased in intensity.

2. The Wadi-al-Ajam has been abandoned by the Christians, and the Druse bands have even been raiding the outskirts of Katana, the capital of the Kada.

3. The daring of the bands is so extreme that one, that of Akkasheh (see the fifth press extract enclosed in my above-mentioned despatch) actually encamped one night in the garden of the town house of Mustafa Pasha-al-Abid, brother of the late Izzet Pasha, telling his servants that they would do no harm if left in peace.

4. But the most remarkable development has been the appearance, in the gardens east of Damascus, of a mixed band of Druse mountaineers and villagers of the plain and Moslem villagers and Damascenes. This band, which was quickly swollen by bad characters from town and country, appears to be under the leadership of a certain Hassan-al-Kharrat, once a night-watchman of Damascus. Its activities appear to be mainly directed to the search for arms and ammunition. They have not molested the Moslem landlords or peasants, beyond supplying themselves with food at the expense of the people generally. They have pillaged a few Christian houses, and they broke into the farm of M. Coudsi, honorary vice-consul of Portugal, at Shafouniyeh, about 5 miles east of Damascus. Incidentally, they seized forty goats belonging to a Palestinian. In view of the hopelessness of recovering anything through the French authorities, I caused an indirect message to be sent to the robbers to the effect that the goats were British property and should be returned. They replied that they were sorry, but that the goats had already been eaten.

5. Finally, sixty Syrian gendarmes under three officers were sent out against the band and billeted themselves on the village of Maleiha, about 6 miles east of the town. In the night the band entered the village, overpowered the gendarmes in their sleep, killing only one. The officers were sent as prisoners to the Jebel Druse, the men stripped and sent back to the town.

6. Somehow or other, the belief suddenly became general at Damascus that this band was going to enter the town and, with the help of elements inside, repeat the coup of Hama. French soldiers for the last three nights have been going about with their rifles when off duty; patrols of French soldiers and gendarmes have been circulating in the town, especially at night. At the midday prayer yesterday (Friday) the Christians, in anticipation of trouble, closed their shops in the vicinity of the Omayad Mosque. In short, all the symptoms of the previous panics have reappeared. To illustrate the prevalence of the belief that an incursion was about to take place, I may mention that a sheikh of the Meydan quarter called on me this morning to assure me of the resolve of the Meydan sheikhs to protect their Christian neighbours when the attack took place, just as they had protected them during the 1860 massacre.

6. The ostentatious measures of defence taken by the French on such occasions no doubt contribute to these panics, and the frankly displayed timidity of French individuals does not tend to create confidence. The French delegate, M. Aubouard, told me that there were over 2,000 French troops in the town, and such a force should be more than adequate to deal with any incursion from without and rising from within. Some Moslems have expressed to me the belief that the French want to provoke an incident in order to use violent measures of repression with a view to terrorising the population. In this connection I would mention that General Soule remarked to me a few evenings ago that he wished the Damascenes would give the French a chance of dealing with them as the Hama rebels had been dealt with.

7. M. Aubouard called on me this morning and assured me that there was no danger for Europeans. Any band which entered the town would probably confine its attention to pillaging the bazaars. Anyhow, French troops were being sent out to-day to attack Hassan-al-Kharrat's band, which he estimated at about 100. He told me not to be alarmed if I heard the sound of artillery fire. It seems unlikely that 100 brigands would necessitate a French expedition, accompanied by artillery. Native estimates of the band vary from 400 to 1,700. The first figure is perhaps slightly exaggerated.

8. M. Aubouard also told us that the French had finally decided to occupy the Wadi-al-Ajam militarily. My previous reports will have shown that this measure is long overdue.

9. Finally, M. Aubouard informed me that two more French regiments were being sent from Beirut to Damascus, presumably from the reinforcements of three regiments supposed to be arriving from France.

10. While all this commotion is going on, the French High Commission has issued another of its extraordinary communiqués, to the effect that order is re-established in "all Syria." This communiqué is followed by another announcing the bombing of villages north and south of Hama as reprisals for damage done to the railway line.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

No. 269.

*Consul, Damascus, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 21.)*

(No. 20.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Damascus, October 21, 1925.*

INSIGNIFICANT band entered the town unopposed 18th October and was joined by a few citizens. French lost their heads, and without any warning to foreigners withdrew their troops from the city proper and subjected it to two days' unnecessary bombardment.

Calm and communications now precariously re-established.

French have imposed fine of £100,000 gold on the town which they failed to defend and then partially destroyed.

English colony safe. In spite of my earnest representations, French, while collecting their own women in places of safety, abandoned ours to their fate under the bombardment. I got in touch with natives, who furnished protection which the French failed to give. British subjects and consulate were in no danger except from French fire.

Details of this sorry affair by post.

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 23; Jerusalem, No. 10; and Beirut, No. 17.)

No. 270.

*Consul, Damascus, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 23.)*

(No. 21.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Damascus, October 23, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 20.

Consular corps has protested against French action in withdrawing troops and unnecessarily bombarding the town without warning, and with consequent destruction of foreign property and loss of foreign lives (two Italians as so far ascertained).

It has also expressed hope that no effect will be given to French threat to renew bombardment at 1 P.M., 24th October, if fine is not paid.

It has requested French delegate to provide safe transport for foreigners wishing to leave Damascus in accordance with advice given by consuls.

It has held French authorities responsible for safety and immunity from bombardment of foreigners unable to leave.

French delegate is really well disposed, and he went with me over town to-day to visit English colony and combine measures for its safety, but military authorities are masters of situation, and they appear to be only interested in safety of French lives and property.

French have suggested that I should leave consulate in case of another bombardment.

I have refused.

(Sent by post to Bagdad, Jerusalem, Amman, Beirut and Aleppo.)

No. 271.

*Consul, Damascus, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 23.)*

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Damascus, October 22, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 21.

Irish Presbyterian school and house of British Indian subjects damaged by French shells. More cases of this kind will probably be reported, but British Asiatic subjects, &c., have dispersed and cannot all be found for the moment.

Loss of British goods in depository in bazaars destroyed by bombardment is to be feared but cannot yet be ascertained.

I am putting in claims as against French Government responsible for unnecessary bombardment.

My quarter, which was in rebels' possession, was also bombarded, and bits of at least one shell fell into the consulate, where flag was flying. Some of my colleagues and others were inclined to think that I ought to protest, but I would prefer not to say anything about a triviality from my personal point of view. If you think any principle is at stake I should be grateful for your instructions. Of course inconvenience was that I could not very well bring British subjects into consulate for safety, but had to arrange for them in other and relatively safer places.

(Sent by post to Bagdad, Jerusalem, Amman, Beirut and Aleppo.)

[E 6512/357/89]

No. 272.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 24.)*

(No. 2247.)

Sir,

*Paris, October 23, 1925.*

WHEN I forwarded my despatch No. 1998 of the 15th September, dealing generally with the situation in Syria, the French position there was clouded by the investment of Sueida and the disaster to the relief column operating under the command of General Michaud. Conditions in Damascus itself had also recently been unsatisfactory. The effect of these difficulties had not, however, prior to the date of my despatch under reference, made itself felt on public opinion in France, except in a violent press campaign against General Sarrail, conducted notably by the newspapers of the Right and by the "Echo de Paris" correspondent, M. Henri de Kerillis. Under the influence of events, the Government had gone so far as to recall General Michaud and to send out General Gammelin to take over the command of the troops, ostensibly independently of General Sarrail, to whom thus remained, generally speaking, only the civil duties of the High Commissionership. Even on the 15th September, however, I pointed out that more than the personal fortune of General Sarrail was at stake. There might well be involved also the political situation of the Government at home, fresh difficulties for the French Treasury, and even the question of the mandate.

2. The view of the possibilities of the situation noted by me on the 15th September appears to have been only too well justified. For although since that date Sueida has been relieved, the French military authorities have themselves admitted to my assistant military attaché that they have not, on grounds of expense and lack of reinforcements, been in a position to pursue the rebels into the mountains, whether the latter retired and where they have been left in the hope that lack of water may eventually compel them to come to terms. Further, there have been fresh troubles at Damascus and at Hama in the north (very inadequately, according to the military authorities themselves, reported by General Sarrail), and in Paris the campaign against the general has been resumed with increased virulence by M. Henri de Kerillis. There is no doubt that the latter gentleman's articles, which appeared in the "Echo de Paris" from the 28th September to the 6th October, and which contained much secret and apparently stolen documentary evidence, purporting to prove not only the military, but also the political ineptitude of the general, are intended to serve as the basis for a parliamentary attack upon him so soon as the Chambers meet. The "Journal des Débats" of the 22nd October has also published a very vigorous article against the general, and interpellations on the situation have already been tabled both in the Senate and Chamber. Finally, M. Painlevé has ordered a military enquiry into the conduct of General Michaud.

3. On the 22nd October, the development of opinion here with regard to the situation in Syria was carried a stage further by the publication of an unofficial summary of the results of the examination of M. Painlevé by the Finance Committee of the Chamber of Deputies on the 21st October. According to this summary, military expenditure in Syria from the 1st July, 1925, to the 31st December, 1925, was estimated at 106 million francs. For the period the 1st July, 1924, to the 1st July, 1925, 197 million francs only were spent, whilst from 1920 to 1924 the military expenditure amounted to 2,162 million francs. M. Painlevé declared the French losses to amount to thirty-nine killed from the 1st January, to the 30th June, 1925, and to 585 killed between the 1st July and the 15th October, 1925. The number of effectives at present engaged in Syria was stated to be 25,000. Before the Druse rising, the number had been 18,700; in 1920 the number of effectives employed was 70,000.

4. M. Painlevé's statement of the number of men killed since the 1st July was contested by certain members of the commission, but he declared himself unable to explain himself more fully and contented himself with stating that events in Syria had been greatly exaggerated, and that the news from English sources transmitted by pan-Islamic or Bolshevik agencies at Cairo was entirely inexact.

5. An even more interesting episode in the examination of M. Painlevé by the Finance Commission than the statement of losses and expenditure was the request of certain Deputies of the Conservative Opposition, supported by at least one Socialist, for consideration by the League of Nations of the French mandate in Syria. This consideration was not in any way to be the result of the recent reported appeal to the League Assembly of certain native elements in Syria (mentioned in the "Œuvre" of the 24th September). It was suggested, as its protagonists made it quite clear, as a means of securing abandonment of the mandate by France. M. Painlevé appears to have rejected such a proposal and to have stated that, in any case, it could not be debated, save in the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. None the less, in view of the fact that the request for League consideration was made both by Conservative and Socialist representatives on the commission, I consider it a matter of interest and I shall carefully watch any further development. The report that the request has been made can, I imagine, in Syria hardly have any but the worst effect.

I have, &c.  
CREWE.

No. 273.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 24.)*

(No. 23.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

MY telegram No. 21.

French delegate has replied that note of consular corps is being carefully examined, and requesting exact information as to damage to persons and property of foreigners.

I should be grateful for instructions as to whether British claims, which are likely to be more extensive than others and are now coming in, should be presented separately or collectively with other foreign claims. I would prefer separate presentation. In view of wide destruction in the bazaars, British commercial losses may be considerable.

(Sent by post to Jerusalem, Bagdad, Amman, Beirut and Aleppo.)

No. 274.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 24.)*

(No. 24.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

MY telegram No. 20.

French authorities announce that, security having been given for execution of conditions imposed, there will be no second bombardment in connection with recent events.

(Sent by post to Jerusalem, Bagdad, Amman, Beirut and Aleppo.)

[E 6547/357/89]

No. 275.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 26.)*

(No. 209. Secret.)  
Sir,

*Damascus, October 12, 1925*

I HAVE the honour to report that Khalil Bey Rifaat, Director of Police at Damascus, called on me to-day to discuss some current business, and in the course of his visit made some interesting observations on the situation in the town and its neighbourhood.

2. His attitude was pessimistic. He said that the disorders round the town were increasing, and that the bands were becoming more numerous. The economic distress was everywhere providing recruits for these bands. The police had nothing to do with the maintenance of security outside the town. This was the task of the gendarmerie. The ill-paid gendarmes had little encouragement to stand up against these powerful bands. If the gendarmerie was unable to clean up the neighbourhood of Damascus, it was probable that sooner or later the bands would attempt to make incursions into the town, whole quarters of which would join them in the hope of pillage. Already, it was only by infinite tact that the police was able to keep the people quiet. He instanced, as an example of the popular disrespect for authority, the incidents of the Prophet's birthday, when the crowd had, with impunity, torn down and stamped on French flags (see my despatch No. 192 of the 4th instant).

3. He said that the situation was such as to require military treatment. He had urged the French delegation to authorise the issue of an order prohibiting the circulation in the streets after 8 P.M. Such a prohibition would render more difficult inside co-operation with any band entering the town at night. His request had been refused, because the French authorities did not wish any measure taken which would attract public attention to the abnormal situation here.

4. He had recommended that cars should only leave and enter the town between the hours of 6 A.M. and 6 P.M., and he understood that effect was being given to this recommendation.

5. I told him that Mr. Warner, of His Majesty's Legation at Tehran, had with a secretary of the Polish Legation at Tehran left Beirut rather late the preceding day. On reaching the Anti-Lebanon after nightfall, this car had been stopped by a gendarmerie post, which stated that its orders were to prevent cars passing after dark owing to the presence of a band on the road. The party insisted on proceeding, but was stopped by several other gendarmerie posts, at one of which the gendarmes would not let it proceed before receiving a written declaration absolving them from responsibility. As the party neared Damascus, that is to say, as it entered the really dangerous zone, it was not interfered with by gendarmes, for the simple reason that the latter were securely barricaded inside their posts and did not venture out to enforce regulations. The car simply had to drive over feeble wooden barriers put across the road opposite such posts.

6. Khalil Bey Rifaat replied that the reason for the gendarmes' warnings was the presence of a band of 200 Druses, divided in two parts, one on each side of the Beirut road.

7. I asked why the newspaper "Al Zeman," reported to be a governmental organ, had been suddenly suppressed. He said that the reason was partly the annoyance of Subhi Bey and the commander of the gendarmerie at criticisms made against them by the paper. But the main reason was that the Government, fearing that the "Party of Unity" might become too independent and follow in the footsteps of the "Party of the People," had decided to suppress the former, as it had seven weeks ago suppressed the latter. "Al Zeman" was the organ of the "Party of Unity," and had been suppressed with its party. In pursuance of orders received from the Government, he had dissolved both the "Party of Unity" and the "Workers' Party," an absurd body, organised by a charlatan Christian Deputy named Kahaleh, and consisting mainly of Orthodox Greek Christians. Khalil Bey thought that the Government wanted the elections held without any organised parties being in the field. In other words, the intention was to repeat the farcical elections of two years ago, which were characterised by general abstention.

8. I would mention, as a significant corroboration, that "Al Zeman" recently published an official declaration of the "Party of Unity," emphatically denying the general belief that it was a governmental organisation and asserting that it was quite independent. The declaration contained an ironical statement to the effect

that no Constitutional Government had yet been established on the basis of popular support, and that, therefore, the present Government could do without the support of parties. It seems, therefore, that even the subservient "Party of Unity" had begun to be influenced by the popular feeling against the pitiful puppets who are Subhi Bey and his minions.

9. Khalil Bey was very pessimistic about the amount of help he could get from the French in his task of maintaining order. "They do nothing," he remarked.

10. I would observe that the French authorities studiously refrain from warning natives or Europeans, other than French, of any possible dangers. It seems remarkable that, while the gendarmerie was instructed not to let cars pass after sunset on the Beirut road owing to the presence of a band in that neighbourhood, the French authorities should not even have given me a discreet warning on the subject. I have carefully explained to M. Aubouard that I have a double responsibility—towards my own nationals and towards the consular corps, of which I am a member. I have therefore begged him to keep me informed of any dangers. Although, as reported in my despatch No. 204 of the 10th instant, he called on me the day before yesterday and discussed the situation, he made no reference to the Beirut road. I may mention that on the 11th instant I had, on my own information, addressed a despatch to His Majesty's High Commissioner at Jerusalem and to His Majesty's consular officers at Beirut and Aleppo, recommending, among other things, that British travellers should be warned to use the Beirut road only in broad daylight.

11. I am inclined to acquit M. Aubouard of any responsibility for his failure to warn consuls of dangers concerning their nationals. He is himself quite alarmed, but he is forced to carry out the instructions of General Sarrail, who, as I have on several occasions indicated, is trying to avoid any measure which would reveal to the European public the true state of affairs in Southern Syria.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

## No. 276.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Consul Smart (Damascus).*

(No. 16.) *Foreign Office, October 26, 1925.*  
(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegrams Nos. 21 and 22 of 23rd October: Situation at Damascus.

I approve your action in participating in joint consular representations and in lodging claims in respect of British losses, and I appreciate your efforts on behalf of British subjects.

As regards danger to yourself and consulate, I am content to leave question of evacuation to your judgment, but I should strongly deprecate the assumption of any unnecessary personal risk. I recently discussed seriousness of situation with French Ambassador, and will raise it with French Minister for Foreign Affairs in Paris next week.

## No. 277.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Consul Smart (Damascus).*

(No. 17.) *Foreign Office, October 28, 1925.*  
(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram No. 23 of 24th October: Bombardment of Damascus and presentation of British claims.

You should present British claims separately.

## No. 278.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Sir R. Lindsay (Constantinople).*  
(No. 130.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, October 28, 1925.*

BRITISH liaison officer in Syria reports rumour that Franco-Turkish negotiations regarding Syrian frontier are now proceeding in Constantinople, and that Turks are pressing for cession of railway line.

Is there any truth in this, and is danger of French yielding to Turkish pressure sufficiently serious to justify action on our part?

[E 6605/357/89]

## No. 279.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 29.)*

(No. 210.)  
Sir,

*Damascus, October 15, 1925.*

WITH reference to the fifth paragraph of my despatch No. 209, Secret, of the 12th instant, I have the honour to report that Mr. Borland, a British subject and Beirut manager of the Asiatic Petroleum Company, who had come here on a business visit, started in his private car to return to Beirut shortly after 8 A.M. on the 13th instant. The only other person in the car was his chauffeur.

2. As he reached Elbameh, the suburb almost at the end of the oasis and regarded as part of Damascus, from the centre of which it is distant about 7 miles, the car suddenly, at a turning, came upon a lorry stationary across the road. In it were some armed men, presumably engaged in pillaging its contents. They opened fire from the lorry on the car, which the chauffeur brought to a dead stop. Both Mr. Borland and the chauffeur jumped out of the car and ran back out of sight of the brigands. They finally met a car coming out of the town, which they stopped, and in it they came to the consulate.

3. The plundered lorry was apparently a civilian one. Two persons in it, one of whom was a gendarme returning from leave, were wounded; one, I understand, mortally.

4. The band was that of Akkasheh, which committed the attack recounted in the fifth press extract enclosed in my despatch No. 194 of the 5th instant. The daring of the brigands can be estimated by the fact that they were coolly engaged in pillaging a lorry at the very entrance to the town and found time while so doing to hold up another car.

5. The chauffeur of the lorry, which had apparently been too much damaged for immediate repair, brought back the wounded in Mr. Borland's car, which had been emptied of its contents by the brigands. I inspected the car on its return. Its cushions were drenched with the blood of the wounded, and the hood and the car itself riddled with bullets. It was little short of a miracle that none of these bullets hit either Mr. Borland or his chauffeur.

6. Mr. Borland, who was naturally rather upset by the peril he had run, said that, if he had known the dangerous state of the road, he would not have come to Damascus by car. This is only another instance of the danger to which foreigners are exposed here by the French policy of endeavouring to conceal, not only from the public, but also from the consuls, the real state of affairs. If the French authorities would discreetly warn me of danger in any given neighbourhood, I would as discreetly warn British subjects, and thus British lives would not be exposed to unnecessary danger.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 6606/357/89]

## No. 280.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 29.)*

(No. 211.)  
Sir,

*Damascus, October 15, 1925.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 210 of to-day's date regarding the attack on Mr. Borland, I have the honour to enclose herewith copy of a note addressed to me by Mr. Lias, a British subject and ex-headmaster of Victoria College at Alexandria, regarding an attack by a band on a house close to his.

2. This band was one of those which has been attacking the skirts of the town and recently attacked and robbed a carriage quite close to the Victoria (British) Hospital.

3. Most of the British subjects, natives of the United Kingdom as distinct from Asiatics or Africans, are unfortunately in rather exposed quarters. I do not think they run much danger, if the French authorities will only let me know frankly what I am to expect in the way of trouble for them. The policy of concealment is disconcerting and puts some responsibility on my shoulders, not only towards British subjects, but also towards the consular corps, of which I am doyen. I fear that some of my countrymen are inclined to think that I take their dangers rather too lightly. My colleagues have long been clamouring for a consular corps meeting with a view to making representations to the French authorities. As I know that none of my colleagues are charitably inclined towards the French and that such a meeting could only result in a collective representation distasteful to the French, I have steadily evaded calling the meeting.

4. However, in view of the criminal failure of the French authorities to put foreigners suitably on their guard, and in view of the feeling among Europeans other than French, as well as among my colleagues, I have at last felt obliged to address a strong note to the French delegation, copy of which I have the honour to enclose. M. Aubouard was at first rather upset by this note, but I calmed him down in a very amicable interview to-day. I explained to him again in greater detail my double responsibilities and told him that, if he would only keep me informed, I would use such information with the utmost discretion. But, I added, he could not expect me to continue guiding my nationals and my colleagues in a way desired by the French if this Francophile attitude was going to involve me in grave responsibilities for untoward incidents. While, therefore, I would continue my previous policy as far as possible, I must pass some of the responsibility on to his shoulders.

5. M. Aubouard said that he was quite sure of my friendliness, and gave me to understand that he would let me have a tranquillising reply. As of course he is not responsible for the policy of concealment, I thought it advisable to let him know that the strong terms of my note were not dictated by any unfriendliness to him.

6. The situation is not, in my opinion, sufficiently serious to advise British subjects to leave Damascus, and the hint on the subject in my enclosed note was only made with a view to stirring the French authorities to greater solicitude for the safety of our people.

7. I would mention that the French have just begun to show signs of realising that it is impossible to deal with a serious rebellion by ostrich-like methods. Although martial law has not been actually proclaimed, the town presents all the appearances of a military régime. All circulation in the town after 8 p.m. has just been prohibited.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

Enclosure 1 in No. 280.

Mr. Lias to Consul Smart.

Damascus, October 14, 1925.

Sir,  
IN yesterday's issue of "Alif-Ba" the official communiqué states that in spite of absurd rumours (presumably to the contrary) calm reigns throughout Syria.

2. The night before last my wife and I counted between midnight and 1 o'clock in the morning eighteen shots near this house, some of them certainly not farther off than a few hundred yards. On enquiry yesterday I was informed by a neighbour that a house in the gardens had been broken into and the owner robbed of £T. 130. This statement is repeated in yesterday's issue of "Alif-Ba."

3. I am not able to quote a more respectable source than this anti-British journal, because three of our leading newspapers have recently been suppressed by the authorities, the third to suffer having previously enjoyed a Government subsidy.

4. I venture to send you this letter for your information.

Yours faithfully,  
C. R. LIAS.

Enclosure 2 in No. 280.

Consul Smart to M. Aubouard.

M. le Délégué,

Damas, le 14 octobre 1925.  
J'AI l'honneur de vous faire savoir que Mr. Lias, sujet britannique, qui, avec sa femme, habite au bout de la rue Maadarani, c'est-à-dire dans le quartier neuf à côté d'Arnous, me fait savoir que, dans la nuit du 12-13 courant une attaque a été faite sur une maison tout près de la sienne par une bande armée. Les coups de fusil ont retenti tout autour de la maison de mon ressortissant. Cette bande ferait partie de celles qui se sont attaquées à divers quartiers extérieurs de la ville, et se sont même démenées tout près de l'Hôpital anglais.

Je vous prie de bien vouloir me faire savoir si les autorités françaises sont à même d'assurer la sécurité des ressortissants britanniques dans la ville de Damas. Dans le cas que non, je me propose d'avertir mes ressortissants qu'ils feraient bien de quitter la Syrie méridionale le plus tôt possible.

En attendant, je vous prie de bien vouloir faire établir au quartier où habite Mr. et Mrs. Lias un poste militaire français. A présent ce quartier n'est protégé que par un veilleur de nuit armé d'un bâton. L'expérience a démontré pleinement que les gendarmes syriens ne suffisent pas à protéger les habitants contre les bandes.

Je vous prie de bien vouloir faire prendre des mesures du même genre pour protéger l'Hôpital anglais, qui est très exposé aux attaques de ces bandes.

Il y a assez d'Anglais et d'Anglaises dispersés dans le quartier Bab Touma et le quartier israélite, qui feraient tous les frais d'une incursion de l'est. Je vous prie de bien vouloir assurer à mes ressortissants dans ces deux quartiers une protection militaire adéquate.

La délégation n'a pas averti officiellement les étrangers du danger qu'ils courrent à Damas. Au contraire, elle fait publier des communiqués annonçant que l'ordre complet est maintenu à Damas et dans toute la Syrie, c'est-à-dire des communiqués encourageant les étrangers à rester ici. Si donc un sujet britannique est attaqué par les brigands circulant autour et dans la ville, ce sont les autorités mandataires qui en porteront la responsabilité.

Veuillez, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 6607/357/89]

No. 281.

Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 29.)

(No. 212.)  
Sir,

Damascus, October 15, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 204 of the 10th instant, I have the honour to report that a French force moved out into the gardens east of the town on the 12th instant.

2. The main band of Hassan-el-Kharrat was centred at El Zor, a jungle on the banks of the Barada, about 8 miles distant from the town. Apparently the band attacked the French troops as they were advancing, but, finding them too strong, retreated to El Zor, whence it does not yet appear to have been dislodged. The French admit eight killed.

3. The French troops then plundered and burnt the village of Maleiha behind the front (see the sixth paragraph of my above-mentioned despatch), presumably on the ground of complicity with the brigands. They brought back to the town a number of the villagers, among whom a British Indian subject, Selim Khairullah Aghwani. Him, with others, they subsequently shot. I have already reported this incident in my telegram No. 18 of to-day's date, and I am submitting a separate report on the subject. They then turned their attention to the Druse village of Jeramana, which is also behind the front and about 5 miles from the town. In it is the country house of Nassib Bey Bakri, a Damascene notable who has joined the rebels in the Jebel Druse. They plundered and burnt this village on similar grounds of complicity with the rebels. In the village they plundered the house of Fakhri Kanafani, honorary cavass of this consulate. This incident was also reported in my above-mentioned telegram, and a separate report will be submitted on this subject.

4. After these exploits the French force returned to Damascus. A number of younger males collected from various places were brought prisoners into the town, and some of them were shot. Sixteen corpses were exposed in the principal square of the town to impress the population.

5. The loot of the two above-mentioned villages was openly sold by French African soldiers in the town.

6. The burning of villages guilty of collusion with the bands is no doubt militarily necessary. The inconvenience of such action is that it multiplies the numbers of homeless, ruined men, who inevitably swell the brigand ranks.

7. M. Aubouard informs me that a further expedition in this region will shortly be made. He also told me that a military force was now engaged in sweeping the Beirut road neighbourhood, where attacks in cars have taken place. Another force, I understood from him, is about to move into the Wadi-el-Ajam.

8. I suggested that it was difficult to deal with these bands while the Jebel Druse remained unconquered. He admitted this, and said that it would be necessary gradually to occupy the whole mountain. Unfortunately, he said, there were not at present enough troops available for the purpose. More would have to be brought from France.

9. Tribal troubles, the back-wash of the Hama rebellion, continue in Central Syria, where the French troops appear to be quite unable to protect outlying villages against Bedouin raids. In Hama is the solitude which is called peace. It is a ruined town.

10. Obviously the extent of the rebellion and disorders in Southern Syria is now too extensive for the French troops at General Gamelin's disposal. I expect that in the end the French will find themselves forced to send another 10,000 men to Syria. It is a great pity that these reinforcements cannot be sent at once. The system of reinforcement by driblets will prove costly in lives and material damage to the country. The present policy—the only one possible with the numbers of troops in the field—of flying columns entering the Jebel Druse, plundering villages and then returning to their base is nothing but the dangerous policy of attrition, so seldom successful anywhere.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

[E 6609/357/89]

No. 282.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 29.)*

(No. 214.)

Sir,

*Damascus, October 17, 1925.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 211 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to enclose herewith copy of a letter addressed to me by the French delegate regarding the measures taken for the protection of the British colony at Damascus. I also enclose a copy of my reply.

2. I think that the French authorities have now become alive to the necessity of active measures for the protection of the outlying quarters of the town, where, unfortunately, the British colony is mostly established. I trust, therefore, that my previous strong note has not been without effect in increasing the security of our people here.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

*Enclosure 1 in No. 282.*

*M. Aubouard to Consul Smart.*

M. le Consul,

EN réponse à votre lettre du 14 octobre, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître que la bande à laquelle vous faites allusion a été dispersée par les policiers du Karacol Arnouss, qui ont arrêté trois des individus qui la composaient; ce fait démontre pleinement que la sécurité de cette partie de la ville n'est pas assurée uniquement "par un veilleur de nuit armé d'un bâton." Je crois devoir vous faire remarquer à cette occasion que nos veilleurs de nuit sont munis de revolvers.

Quant à la gendarmerie syrienne que vous incriminez, elle n'avait rien à voir dans l'affaire.

En ce qui concerne Mr. Lias, sa sécurité est assurée au même titre et dans les mêmes conditions que celle des Français ou ressortissants étrangers habitant le même quartier. Je ne crois pas que ce sujet britannique soit particulièrement visé, et vous estimerez avec moi qu'il serait quelque peu exagéré de pourvoir à la sécurité personnelle de Mr. Lias, ainsi que vous le demandez, par un poste militaire français spécialement désigné à l'exclusion de toute troupe d'une autre nationalité.

Vous voulez bien, d'autre part, me signaler, ce que j'ignorais, que nombre d'Anglais et d'Anglaises habitent le quartier israélite et qu'ils sont exposés à une incursion venant de l'est. Vous n'êtes pas sans savoir que de victorieuses opérations de police sont en cours dans la région en question et qu'elles ont déjà donné des résultats fort satisfaisants. De plus, chaque nuit un barrage de gendarmerie est organisé autour de ce quartier.

Vous restez entièrement libre de donner à vos ressortissants tous conseils que vous croirez devoir leur apporter, soit dans le sens auquel vous faites allusion dans votre lettre, soit dans tout autre sens.

En résumé, et sous réserve de circonstances éventuelles de force majeure que nul ne saurait prévoir dans l'Etat le mieux organisé, l'autorité mandataire continuera d'assurer la sécurité de tous, ainsi qu'elle l'a fait jusqu'ici. Je ne sache pas, d'ailleurs, que le nombre des attaques à main armée ou des cambriolages soit plus grand à Damas qu'il ne l'est dans toute agglomération du même ordre en France ou même en Angleterre.

Veuillez, &c.

AUBOUARD.

*Enclosure 2 in No. 282.*

*Consul Smart to M. Aubouard.*

M. le Délégué,

*Damas, le 17 octobre 1925.*  
JE vous remercie de votre lettre d'hier et des assurances que vous avez bien voulu me donner au sujet des mesures qui ont été prises pour assurer la sécurité des étrangers, y compris les ressortissants britanniques, à Damas.

Je crois pouvoir parler au nom de tous mes compatriotes en exprimant ma reconnaissance de l'effort militaire actuellement en train d'être accompli par les troupes françaises qui nous protègent à Damas. Je suis persuadé que cet effort général améliorera la situation et je me repose, avec confiance, sur votre jugement pour des mesures particulières qui pourraient, à un moment donné ou sur des points déterminés, s'imposer pour la protection de mes compatriotes.

C'est dans les deux quartiers de Bab Touma et des Israélites que se trouvent dispersés les Anglais et les Anglaises dont mention a été faite dans ma lettre du 14 courant, non pas seulement dans le quartier israélite.

En vous assurant de nouveau de ma confiance dans la vigilance des autorités mandataires, je vous prie de croire que je n'ai aucun désir de compliquer votre tâche par des importunités déplacées en ce moment un peu difficile. Mes représentations n'ont été motivées que par l'inquiétude qui m'a été inspirée par la position assez exposée de la colonie anglaise, en grande partie féminine, au moment des incursions des bandes.

Veuillez, &c.

W. A. SMART.

[E 6604/6604/89]

No. 283.

*Consul-General Mayers to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 29.)*

(No. 131.)

Sir,

*Beirut, October 20, 1925.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, as a consequence of the various troubles through which Syria and the Lebanon have been passing during the last three months, the commercial situation in Beirut gives some room for anxiety.

2. Disturbance in the hinterland has not only caused stagnation here, but has also made it difficult for Beirut merchants to collect debts in the interior. Some bills will

never be met, others are postponed. It is felt that a crop of bankruptcies is the least result to be expected from the serious political situation.

3. The banks are said to be very exacting in granting credits, and the custom-house is full of consignments hung up by the uncertainty of the outlook.

I have, &c.  
NORMAN MAYER.

No. 284.

*Consul, Damascus, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 29.)*

(No. 25.)  
(Telegraphic.)

MY telegram No. 20.

Emir Said, of famous Abdul Kader family, and his relations responded to my appeal for assistance to protect English women in Christian quarter abandoned by French troops during recent fighting.

The French authorities are now taking action against the family apparently on suspicion of its complicity with bands. They threaten to arrest Emir Said, and have arrested two of his cousins. I cannot say whether suspicion is justified or not.

Family has given me to understand that it wants my assistance.

In the present exposed position, still inadequately protected, Christian quarter can only rely on my influence over Mussulman notables for protection of English colony. French protection cannot be counted upon. If such Moslems help me in my hour of need, and I do nothing for them in theirs, it is unlikely that Moslem help will be so prompt on next occasion.

Situation is exceedingly delicate owing to belief of French colonials that we are at the bottom of this last, as of all other troubles, in Syria.

Do you think I could inform French delegate that, while not wishing to interfere in French affairs, arrest of persons who protect English colony will cause regret amongst British public? It would be necessary for me to add that I make the communication with your knowledge.

[E 6643/5639/65]

No. 285.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 30.)*

(No. 2290.)

Sir,  
I HAVE the honour to report that King Feisal's secretary called here to-day and spoke to Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen about the interview which King Feisal had yesterday with M. Briand and M. Berthelot.

2. He said that the King had confined himself to general expressions of cordiality and goodwill and assurances that he harboured no unfriendly intentions towards France in Syria. M. Berthelot and M. Briand had of their own accord gone more into detail. They had both informed King Feisal confidentially that General Sarrail was to be recalled, that there was to be a change of policy in Syria and that a civilian Governor would be appointed. They had every intention of acting in the closest unity with His Majesty's Government, whose views on the Mosul question they shared. The harmony of action between France, Great Britain and Irak would leave the Turks in an isolated position. The French Government proposed to institute closer relations with Irak and would appoint a consular representative.

3. As regards the position of General Sarrail, it may be added that the Director of the Quai d'Orsay Press Bureau to-day informed the British press correspondents, though not for publication, that General Sarrail's recall was practically certain.

I have, &c.  
CREWE.

No. 286.

*Sir R. Lindsay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 30.)*

(No. 127.)  
(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 130.

Negotiations on Syrian frontier here have made no progress, as the Turkish delegates are all natives of the frontier region and unable to make any concessions. The French Ambassador has now gone to Angora and means to discuss direct with the Turkish Government.

There may be considerable risk that in exchange for some territorial or other *quid pro quo* the French might agree to make some concessions as to the use of the railway, though they might not go so far as to concede it. I think that reminder at Paris might be judicious.

No. 287.

*Consul, Damascus, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 30.)*

(No. 26.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

MY telegram No. 23.

I have now had time to get round to examine British damage. Fortunately, losses are likely to be much less than feared. Sufferers are mainly the more modest class of Asiatic subjects or mandatory nationals. I am also now hopeful that direct British commercial losses may be insignificant, because it has been ascertained that merchants, in anticipation of trouble, had largely emptied the bazaars, removing goods to their private houses, especially the staple lines in which we are more particularly interested. Indirect damage, by failure of ruined Damascus merchants to meet obligations to British firms, cannot of course be estimated.

(Sent by post to Bagdad, Jerusalem, Amman, Beirut and Aleppo.)

No. 288.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Consul Smart (Damascus).*

(No. 18.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, October 30, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 25 of 29th October: Abdul Kader family.

Safety of British subjects must be our chief consideration and should not be imperilled by the exaggerated suspiciousness of French colonials.

You are therefore authorised to speak to the French delegate in sense which you suggest in telegram under reply.

I am taking steps to inform French Government.  
(Repeated to Paris, No. 305 (by bag).)

No. 289.

*Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).*

(No. 306.)  
(Telegraphic.)

[By Bag.]

*Foreign Office, October 30, 1925.*

MR. SMART'S telegram No. 25 of 29th October and my reply No. 18 to him.

You should explain the position to Minister for Foreign Affairs and express to him earnest hope that French Government will instruct local authorities in Syria to co-operate in all possible ways with Mr. Smart.

While we realise the great difficulties with which the French have to contend, and sympathise with them, we cannot ignore the interests and protection of British subjects, and those who have come to their support. In the absence of French protection His Majesty's consul is bound to rely upon his means for assisting his nationals.

(Repeated to Damascus, No. 19, in cypher.)

No. 290.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 31.)*

(No. 58.) (Teleggraphic.)

*Beirut, October 31, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"High Commissioner recalled to Paris to explain. General Duport Acting High Commissioner."

(Repeated to Bagdad and Palestine.)

No. 291.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 31.)*

(No. 27.)

(Teleggraphic.) R.

*Damascus, October 31, 1925.*

REPORTS arriving here of violent anti-French agitation in Moslem countries under our aegis against French bombardment of Damascus.

I venture to hope that recommendations contained in penultimate paragraph of my despatch No. 220 of 25th October, on the way, with full account may be given particular effect to in such countries, and that High Commissioners of Egypt, Palestine and Irak may be able to exert their influence to restrain the agitation, which may imperil Anglo-French solidarity and consequently all mandatory peace, whether French or British, in these parts.

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 25; Jerusalem, No. 11; and Cairo. Sent by post to Beirut, Aleppo and Amman.)

[E 6680/357/89]

No. 292.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 2.)*

(No. 2304.)

Sir,

*Paris, October 30, 1925.*

IN my despatch No. 2247 of the 23rd October I had the honour to inform you that public opinion in France was becoming more and more anxious regarding the situation in Syria. Events of the past ten days have only served to increase this anxiety. As usual, practically no news from French sources has been obtainable regarding the revolt and subsequent disorders at Damascus, but the reports published in the British newspapers have been widely reproduced and commented on. In particular, the article printed in the "Times" of the 27th October, giving a full account of the bombardment of Damascus, has given rise to much discussion. Had it not been for the fall of the Government, even more attention would no doubt have been paid by the Paris newspapers to the Syrian situation.

2. The news that the population in Damascus had risen in revolt and that the French had been compelled to bombard the city before order could be restored has been received in Paris with feelings akin to consternation. While the full story, with all its attendant horrors, as set forth by the "Times" correspondent, is not accepted as accurate, and while strenuous efforts are made to discredit messages coming from British sources, the press is united in admitting that the present situation in Syria is extremely grave. From having originally been a purely local disturbance in the Jebel Druse, the trouble has gradually spread as far as Hama and Damascus, and it is realised that unless firm and decisive action is taken rapidly, the French will find themselves face to face with a nationalist movement, to cope with which would tax all their resources. The gravity of the situation is increased by the knowledge that very considerable sums of money will have to be expended before the situation can be effectively restored, and this at a time when any unexpected drain upon the French exchequer may have far-reaching results.

3. An immediate consequence of the news of the troubles in Damascus has been the renewal of the attack upon General Sarrail. The press is united practically in its denunciation of the High Commissioner; only the "Œuvre" attempts to defend him

by endeavouring to make out that the various religious bodies in the Lebanon are at the bottom of all the trouble. Even the "Œuvre," however, admits that the present situation in Syria is serious to a degree. It is now practically universally recognised, except by the most ardent members of the *Bloc des Gauches*, that General Sarrail's appointment was an absolute blunder. The High Commissioner has shown himself completely incapable of understanding the native psychology or of dealing tactfully and diplomatically with the various problems with which he has been confronted. Nor have his efforts as a soldier met with any more success. It is now certain that General Sarrail will be removed from his post very shortly. M. Briand, who all along is known to have been anxious for his recall, is understood to have insisted on this. Although no official announcement has yet been made public, the director of the Press Department at the Quai d'Orsay yesterday privately informed various foreign journalists that General Sarrail's days were numbered, while M. Berthelot, in conversation with King Feisal's private secretary, confirmed this statement. It is rumoured in several of the newspapers that General Sarrail's immediate successor will be General Guillaumat, whose main task will be to retrieve the military situation. Once this has been done, he will in all probability be succeeded by a civil High Commissioner. The name of M. Paul-Boncour has been suggested in some quarters as a possible nominee.

4. While there can, of course, be no doubt that General Sarrail must be considered as largely responsible for the present state of affairs in Syria, it is hard to believe that he is solely to blame for all that has happened during his ten months' stewardship. It would seem that there must be something radically wrong with the system at present followed by the French in their administration of the Syrian territories. The prevalent report that it is intended to appoint a civil High Commissioner would seem to show that the authorities at home have realised that drastic changes are required.

5. The general deterioration in the situation can hardly fail to strengthen the feeling of a large body of French public opinion, referred to in paragraph 5 of my despatch under reference, that the Syrian mandate should be abandoned. This policy of "scuttle" will gain more and more adherents as long as the present unsatisfactory state of affairs continues.

6. In this connection it may perhaps be worth remarking that in the various articles which have recently appeared in the press discussing France's position as a mandatory Power in Syria and the possibility of her abandoning this position, practically no reference has been made to the fate of the native population in such an event. It would seem to be entirely forgotten that France was entrusted with the mandate by the League of Nations for the benefit and the progressive amelioration of the native inhabitants of the country, and not with the object of increasing France's prestige in the Near East.

7. Several newspapers have expressed the fear that if the present troubles continue much longer in Syria the League of Nations will be forced to intervene and to enquire into the whole matter, and from the tone of the articles it is to be inferred that the French themselves apprehend that the results of any such enquiry are unlikely to be favourable to the French. Another matter which has somewhat shaken the general composure is the fact that it is understood that the American Ambassador in Paris has been instructed to enter a protest against the manner in which Damascus was shelled without an opportunity being afforded to the European, and more especially the American, residents to leave the city.

8. It is to be anticipated that, unless the state of affairs greatly improves in the immediate future, the question of Syria will loom largely in the proceedings of the forthcoming parliamentary session.

I have, &c.  
CREWE.

[E 6678/357/89]

No. 293.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 2.)*

(No. 2311.)

Sir,

*Paris, October 31, 1925.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 2304 of the 30th instant, I have the honour to inform you that General Sarrail has been recalled from his post as High Commissioner in Syria.

2. As you will observe from the text of the official communiqué issued last night, a copy of which is enclosed herein, it is intended eventually to appoint a civilian as

High Commissioner when the system of government to be pursued in Syria shall have been finally decided. This question is now under discussion by a committee which has been sitting in Paris under the presidency of M. Paul-Boncour since July last.

3. Until such time as the civilian High Commissioner shall be appointed, General Duport, who has just arrived in Syria, will act as High Commissioner *ad interim*.

4. To judge by reports in to-day's newspapers, it would seem that the post of High Commissioner in Syria was definitely offered by the Government to M. Paul-Boncour, who, however, refused it, stating that he preferred to remain in Paris and continue to work as president of the above-mentioned committee. It is also hinted that the post was offered to M. Berenger, while the names of M. Franklin-Bouillon and M. Albert Sarraut, the French Ambassador at Constantinople, are also mentioned in this connection.

I have, &c.  
CREWE.

Enclosure in No. 293.

Extract from the "Echo de Paris" of October 31, 1925.

SARRAIL RAPPELÉ.

A MINUIT, la Présidence du Conseil a communiqué la note suivante concernant les mesures qui ont été prises par le Conseil de Cabinet tenu dans la soirée :

"L'organisation définitive du mandat syrien, donné à la France par la Société des Nations, est confié depuis juillet à une commission, présidée par M. Paul-Boncour, qui poursuit activement ses travaux.

"Le Gouvernement a décidé de nommer un Haut-Commissaire civil quand le mandat sera organisé.

"Le Général Sarrail a été invité à rentrer à Paris pour fournir au Gouvernement et à la commission tous renseignements utiles."

Le Général Duport, qui vient d'arriver en Syrie, est chargé de l'intérim jusqu'à désignation du Haut-Commissaire civil.

No. 294.

The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 2.)

(No. 399.) [By Bag.] Paris, October 31, 1925.  
(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 306 and Mr. Smart's telegram No. 25.

M. Briand was in the country to-day, so I went to see M. Berthelot, and explained the position to him, leaving an *ajde-mémoire* in the sense of your telegram.

He spoke in terms of the greatest contempt for General Sarrail, whose recall he welcomed; saying that the general's excuse for having given no warning to foreigners of the impending bombardment, by almost boasting that he had not warned French citizens either, would be comic if the facts were not so serious. The general had been told in sharp terms that a French commander was doubly bound to safeguard the nationals of other countries, and from the tone used by M. Berthelot I have no doubt that the outgoing Governor is not having a pleasant time of it.

Nothing had been heard in Paris of the Emir Said or his family, but a telegram would be sent at once to the effect that as much consideration as possible should be shown to a man who had done his best to protect the British colony, which General Sarrail had himself not done, as M. Berthelot remarked in a parenthesis. He was evidently thoroughly ashamed of the bombardment, and of the whole conduct of the French authorities in the suppression of the rising.

No. 295.

The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 3.)

(No. 401.) [By Bag.] Paris, November 2, 1925.  
(Telegraphic.)

I WENT to see King Feisal at his hotel by appointment this afternoon. He spoke with great satisfaction of his visit to England, both with regard to public affairs and to the excellent effect on his health, he having gained several pounds in weight, which I can well believe to be a benefit to him.

He was also well satisfied with his interviews here with MM. Briand and Berthelot and with the President of the Republic. They all had assured him of their conviction that France and England could work in perfect concert with Irak for the benefit of his country, and the King seemed genuinely impressed by the attitude of the French statesmen.

Yesterday, however, a new situation had arisen by his having met M. Berthelot at a dinner given by Prince Lotfallah, when the King had been asked whether he could not put off his departure from Paris for two or three days. He had said that this would cause great inconvenience, but he was pressed to come and talk the matter over at the Quai d'Orsay this afternoon, though the hurry of a dinner party did not enable him to gather more than that the French hoped he might make his journey home by way of Damascus. Of this unexpected suggestion King Feisal spoke, as I thought, with some shrewdness. He could quite see the advantage that would come from friendly association with the French on their Syrian frontier, as it would help to carry out the plan of three-cornered friendship alluded to above. On the other hand, he was not going to commit himself. He does not desire to run into any personal danger, and he does not know the scope of the military operations which are still proceeding. Also he did not wish to interfere in the internal affairs of Syria; he had anything but a pleasant recollection of his previous treatment by the military authorities, saying almost plaintively: "The French in Syria are very different from the French in Paris." In fact, he is evidently afraid of being made a cat's-paw of for the benefit of the French occupation in Syria, and of incurring the hearty dislike of his co-religionists in the process. I said that of course I could have no opinion about his undertaking the journey by that route, or give him any advice. I would only say that it would be wise, before coming to a decision, to consider the proposal carefully in all its aspects, and, as he himself had stated, to ascertain precisely the state of affairs as regards both the forces engaged in a rising against the French occupation and also the bands of brigands merely out for plunder. King Feisal said that he expected to be able to let me know to-morrow the result of his conversation at the Quai d'Orsay. He added that he had heard from the French Government that an attempt would be made to get M. Henry de Jouvenel to go as High Commissioner, and there seemed to be hope that he would accept. I may mention that when I saw M. Berthelot on 31st October he told me, in strict confidence, that they had in their minds M. Paul Doumer for the post, but he did not think there was much chance of his agreeing to go. I therefore did not think the possibility worth reporting, and it seems that either the idea has not been pursued or that M. Doumer has refused. He might well do so on the grounds of age.

No. 296.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Consul Smart (Damascus).

(No. 20.) [R.] Foreign Office, November 3, 1925.  
(Telegraphic.)

MY telegram No. 18 of 30th October: Abdul Kader family, last paragraph. French Ministry for Foreign Affairs state that nothing has been heard in Paris of Emir Said or his family. They are telegraphing to their authorities in Syria that as much consideration as possible should be shown to a man who had done his best to protect the British colony.

[E 6763/357/89]

No. 297.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 4.)*

(No. 216.)

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 21 of to-day's date, I have the honour to transmit herewith the note of the consular corps regarding the recent incursion into Damascus and the bombardment of the town by the French.

2. In my telegram No. 22 of to-day's date I have referred to the question of the foreigners killed and foreign property damaged by French shells. Hitherto only two deaths of Italian Tripolitan subjects, one of whom was a woman, have been reported. This question may become serious as the extent of such losses is ascertained. I presume that there can be no doubt as to the direct responsibility of the French Government for reparations.

3. I would mention that in the early evening of the 18th instant the French dropped a shell into the Irish Presbyterian School at the very moment when I was vainly imploring the general commanding the troops and the delegate to let me pass through the lines, not yet withdrawn, and bring out the two English ladies (Miss Ball and Miss Alexander) in the school. By a miracle they were not hurt, and, after a painful sojourn in their wood-cellars, were rescued by a Canadian, Mr. Ebey, fortunately outside the French lines, and taken to a safer place. Both the general and M. Aubouard had assured me that these ladies would be in no danger if they stayed quietly in their houses.

4. I am at present too overwhelmed with work to be able to submit the general report promised in my telegram No. 20 of the 21st instant. The panic caused by the threat of a renewal of the bombardment to-morrow has submerged the consulate with British subjects, Iraqis, Palestinians, &c., seeking guarantees of safety or facilities for departure. The roads are blocked and the Beirut Railway is none too safe. Besides, the rare and small narrow-gauge trains are packed with fugitives. Although I can hardly believe that the French, to whom I have verbally expressed myself very strongly on the subject, will be so foolish as to renew the bombardment, I cannot, in view of previous experience of their vagaries, take any risks. I am therefore struggling with the difficult problem of getting out of the town several hundreds of British nationals in case of bombardment. In these circumstances I hope you will understand how impossible it is for me at present to write detailed reports.

I have, &amp;c.

W. A. SMART.

Enclosure in No. 297.

*Consul Smart to M. Aubouard.*

Décanat du Corps consulaire, Damas,  
le 21 octobre 1925.

M. le Délégué,

JE suis chargé par le corps consulaire de vous faire la communication suivante sur les événements à Damas.

A maintes reprises, par des communications orales et écrites aux consuls, par des communiqués publiques annonçant le calme complet à Damas, les autorités mandataires ont assuré les étrangers de leur sécurité à Damas. Par suite de ces assurances officielles de l'autorité tenue responsable par la Société des Nations et le Gouvernement des États-Unis d'Amérique, les consuls, malgré leurs inquiétudes, n'ont pas conseillé à leurs ressortissants de quitter la ville.

Du 18 au 20 du mois courant, par suite de l'incursion d'une bande peu considérable, aidée par des éléments peu nombreux de la populace, les autorités mandataires, sans donner aucun avertissement aux étrangers, afin qu'ils pussent se mettre en sûreté, ont cru devoir retirer leurs troupes de la ville, laissant sans aucune protection les étrangers, y compris les femmes et les enfants, aussi bien que la population chrétienne et israélite indigène.

En même temps et sans donner aucun avertissement, elles ont soumis la ville à un bombardement prolongé et très étendu, tel que d'habitude ne subissent que des places fortes. Elles ont laissé les étrangers sous ce bombardement, tandis que les Français ont été retirés hors du danger. Par suite des difficultés de circulation, les pertes de vie et

les dégâts matériels subis par les étrangers n'ont pas encore été constatés, mais on sait déjà que plusieurs maisons étrangères ont été endommagées et que quelques étrangers ont été tués par des obus français.

Vu les circonstances préindiquées, le corps consulaire est obligé de tenir les autorités françaises responsables des biens et des vies étrangers perdus pendant les événements actuels.

Étant donné que les assurances indiquées au commencement de cette note n'ont pas été réalisées et vu l'action susmentionnée des troupes françaises, le corps consulaire ne peut plus prendre la responsabilité de conseiller à ses ressortissants de compter sur la protection mandataire. Il conseille donc à ses ressortissants de quitter Damas et prie les autorités françaises de bien vouloir mettre des moyens de transport sûrs et suffisants à la disposition des étrangers qui voudraient suivre ce conseil.

Cependant, il est certain que bien des étrangers ne pourront pas quitter Damas. Il est du devoir de la Puissance mandataire de leur assurer une protection adéquate par des forces suffisantes et de ne pas les exposer aux dangers des bombardements. Le corps consulaire est donc obligé de tenir l'autorité mandataire responsable de la vie et des biens de leurs ressortissants restant à Damas.

A ce propos, le corps consulaire espère qu'à l'avenir la protection de la capitale de la Syrie pourra être assurée sur un front militaire hors de la ville. Évidemment, à défaut d'une pareille protection extérieure, rien n'empêchera d'autres bandes d'entrer dans la ville, qui deviendra encore une fois le théâtre d'opérations militaires dont s'effrayeront les étrangers qui s'y sont établis en se fiant à la protection française.

Il est à remarquer que les pertes occasionnées par les bombardements et incendies dans les principaux centres commerciaux de la ville auront des répercussions inévitables et prolongées sur les maisons européennes et américaines en relations d'affaires avec les commerçants damascains ruinés par ces destructions. D'ailleurs, il y a eu sans doute des marchandises appartenant à des Européens et à des Américains en dépôt dans les magasins détruits.

Des bruits ont couru que les autorités françaises auraient l'intention, en certaines circonstances, de recommencer le bombardement de la ville. Un pareil bombardement ne manquera pas de causer d'autres pertes de vies et de biens étrangers. Le corps consulaire, ému par des sentiments particuliers de sollicitude pour ses ressortissants et par des sentiments généraux d'humanité, ose exprimer l'espérance qu'un tel bombardement pourra être évité et que, si des répressions deviennent nécessaires, elles pourront se faire selon des méthodes plus en usage dans des cas de désordres urbains—des méthodes plus aptes à faire châtier les coupables sans frapper les innocents, y compris les femmes et les enfants. Le corps consulaire ne croit pas devoir faire cette émotion humanitaire, car, quels qu'aient pu être les méfaits de certains éléments, la population musulmane de Damas en général a protégé les chrétiens et les israélites, y compris les étrangers, avec une très grande bienveillance, quand, après le retrait des troupes françaises, ils n'avaient aucune autre protection à espérer.

Je suis chargé de vous faire savoir que mes collègues et moi transmettons à nos Gouvernements respectifs des copies de cette note.

Je profite, &amp;c.

W. A. SMART,  
Doyen du Corps consulaire.

[E 6765/357/89]

No. 298.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 4.)*

(No. 218.)

Sir,

Damascus, October 24, 1925.

WITH reference to my telegrams No. 21 of the 23rd instant and No. 24 of to-day's date, and my despatch No. 216 of the 23rd instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the answer of the French delegate to the note of the consular corps regarding the recent events at Damascus.

I have, &amp;c.

W. A. SMART.

Enclosure in No. 298.

*M. Aubouard to Consul Smart.*

M. le Consul,

J'AI l'honneur de vous accuser réception de la note collective que vous avez bien voulu me faire parvenir sans numéro et en date du 21 octobre.

Cette note est dès maintenant soumise à un examen attentif et détaillé.

Toutefois, pour me permettre de réunir les éléments d'appréciation nécessaires, je vous demande de vouloir bien me faire connaître très exactement les dommages subis par les ressortissants étrangers, soit dans leurs personnes, soit dans leurs biens.

Veuillez agréer, &c.

Le Délégué du Haut-Commissaire auprès des  
États de Syrie et du Djebel Druse,  
AUBOUARD.

Damas, le 23 octobre 1925.

No. 299.

[E 6766/357/89]

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 4.)*

(No. 219.)

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 24 of to-day's date, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter from the French delegate announcing that no second bombardment of Damascus would take place in connection with recent events.

2. Apparently the notables are still refusing to produce the 100,000 Turkish gold pounds, and the Syrian Government and municipality, at the instance of the French, are guaranteeing the payment of the fine and the delivery of the 3,000 rifles. The French of course have by now realised the immense damage they have inflicted on respectable native and foreign interests by their wanton bombardment and were really anxious to find some way out of executing the threat of a second bombardment.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

Enclosure 1 in No. 299.

*M. Aubouard to Consul Smart.*

M. le Consul,

J'AI l'honneur de vous adresser le texte de la communication faite ce jour à la population de la ville de Damas par le Gouvernement syrien et le délégué du Haut-Commissaire de la Puissance mandataire.

Je vous demande de bien vouloir en faire connaître la teneur à vos ressortissants.

Veuillez agréer, &c.

AUBOUARD.

Enclosure 2 in No. 299.

*Announcement made to Damascus Population.*

LE Gouvernement syrien et le délégué du Haut-Commissaire de la Puissance mandataire portent à la connaissance de la population ce qui suit :

En ce qui concerne l'indemnité à payer par la ville, les répondants ont donné leurs signatures et le versement est assuré dès ce jour conformément aux conditions imposées.

Quant aux fusils, la question est également réglée : le versement est commencé et toutes garanties sont prises pour que le versement intégral soit effectué.

En conséquence, toute possibilité de bombardement répondant à une sanction pour les derniers événements est en principe écartée.

No. 300.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 4.)*

(No. 29.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Damascus, November 4, 1925.

ALL Central and Southern Syria now overrun by rebel bands and railways under their menace. Line cut 9 miles south of Damascus by Druse, with whom strong French force engaged battle.

Communication with Irak interrupted.

Band advancing from east towards Damascus apparently scattered 3rd November within a few miles of city as result of French aerial action. Advance of bands, and subsequently smoke and sound of battle, caused another panic and exodus to coast.

(Sent to Bagdad, No. 27, and Jerusalem, No. 12.)

No. 301.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 5.)*

[By Bag.]

(No. 405. Confidential.)

(Telegraphic.)

Paris, November 4, 1925.

MY telegram No. 401 of 2nd November and Mr. Phipps's letter to Mr. Oliphant of yesterday.

2. King Feisal received Mr. Phipps this afternoon, and informed him of the result of his meeting at the Quai d'Orsay this morning, at which M. Berthelot, M. Clinchant and M. Robert de Caix were present. M. Berthelot told King Feisal that the French Government intended to draw up an organic law for Syria, but that it was not yet quite ready. Meanwhile, he would be glad to have His Majesty's advice as to how the Syrian question should be dealt with. King Feisal thereupon replied that he would speak perfectly frankly, but only as a private individual, even at the risk of causing offence. He then proceeded to point out the difference in the situation in Irak, where there were only some 2,000 British troops collected together in their cantonments, and in Syria, in its disturbed condition, in spite of the presence of 30,000 French troops. Irak, moreover, enjoyed complete independence so far as internal affairs were concerned. If the French Government desired order to be re-established, the only advice he could offer was that they should proceed without delay to imitate the behaviour of the British in Irak, and to grant to Syria a similar Constitution. For this it was necessary for the French to select a suitable personage, and to propose him to the Syrians for election by plebiscite, either as King or as President of the Republic, whichever the French preferred. M. Berthelot replied that there were two vital differences between Irak and Syria : (a) The fact that Syria was not a unified State, but a collection of States, whereas Irak was only one; and (b) that there was in Syria no outstanding personality, such as King Feisal himself, who would be suitable to act as Head of the State. His Majesty retorted that it was a great mistake to endeavour to divide up Syria into a series of States; unity was essential, and the sooner it was brought about the better, although, if necessary, a large measure of autonomy could be granted to the States in question. It was also absolutely essential in an Eastern country carefully to select a ruler. If this were done, and a Constitution on lines practically similar to that of Irak granted to Syria, he was convinced that calm would soon be restored. King Feisal told Mr. Phipps that M. Berthelot had received this advice remarkably well, and had assured him that it would be taken. He begged His Majesty, therefore, directly he arrived at Amman, to do all he could by letters or otherwise to reassure his friends in Syria as to French intentions, and to proceed in a similar manner on his return to Bagdad. This King Feisal promised to do, but pointed out that in return it was essential that the French should follow in every particular the advice which he had given them, for otherwise he would be accused of treachery towards his Syrian friends. M. Berthelot assured him that this would be done, and that a civilian governor, not

M. Henry de Jouvenel, who had refused the post, would shortly proceed to Syria, and would get into touch with King Feisal and endeavour to work in collaboration with him to the best of his ability. His Majesty thereupon declared his willingness to allow the Emir Zeid to pass through Damascus on his return journey to England with a view to smoothing down affairs as far as possible. M. Berthelon then followed His Majesty to the door and said to him in an undertone pregnant with meaning: "Alas! we have lost you!"

3. Mr. Phipps enquired whether King Feisal had any particular candidate in view as Head of the Syrian State, to which His Majesty replied that he had not mentioned any to the French, but that, speaking quite privately, he considered that either of his brothers, the Emir Abdullah or the Emir Zeid, but particularly the latter, would be suitable. There was nobody in Syria of sufficient standing for the post, and he felt sure that if the Emir Zeid were proposed by means of a plebiscite he would be elected by an overwhelming majority. He said, however, that if His Majesty's Government thought his brothers unsuitable, he would be quite ready to back the candidature of anybody who appeared desirable to the British and French Governments. He would be grateful to learn at Amman whether his proposals, as outlined above, are approved by His Majesty's Government. He expressed the utmost satisfaction with the manner in which they had been received by M. Berthelon and the other two gentlemen present, and indeed, altogether with his reception by the French authorities during his stay in Paris.

[E 6841/357/89]

No. 302.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 9.)*

(No. 2359.)

Sir,

Paris, November 7, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that on the 5th November the Chamber decided by 400 votes to 30 to postpone to a date to be decided later, after the return of General Sarrail, the interpellation of the Government regarding the present situation in Syria. The debate, which though at times heated and disturbed was of no real interest, was begun by various members of the *Bloc national*, who pressed for the immediate discussion of the interpellation. This proposal was strongly opposed by the President of the Council, who insisted that it was impossible for the Government to meet the interpellation before General Sarrail had returned to France and made his promised report. After considerable discussion, in which it became clear that the Socialist party would support M. Painlevé in the question at issue, it was suggested that the date of the 20th November should be fixed for the interpellation. The President of the Council at first appeared to accept this motion, but taking offence at the speeches of some members of the Right, M. Painlevé later declared that he could not appear to surrender to their dictation, and must insist on the adjournment *sine die* of the interpellation. He did, however, promise that General Sarrail, who is expected to return to France on the 15th November, should be interrogated at once, and would be allowed to appear before the competent parliamentary commissions in order to give such evidence as they might desire. Furthermore, as soon as the Government had received General Sarrail's report, and with it the information for which it was waiting, it would be quite ready to invite the Chambers to discuss the general question. In view of this assurance, and no doubt because it was realised that the Socialists would vote with the Government, the Opposition decided not to press their motion and to abstain from voting. In the end the motion to adjourn the interpellation was carried with only thirty dissentients, nearly all of whom were Communists.

2. Very few speeches of any interest were made during the debate. The Communist spokesmen made it clear that they adopted the same line as regards Syria as they had in connection with Morocco, and that in their opinion the sooner Syria became an independent State the better. M. Blum, speaking for the Socialist party, declared that the particular question of General Sarrail's competence or responsibility for recent events was of no great interest to them. They were, however, anxious to have the whole question of the position of France in Syria, both as regards the past and the future, thoroughly investigated. The only announcement of any interest made by the President of the Council was a statement of the losses which the French troops,

as opposed to the North African and other native regiments, had suffered in Syria since 1920. These losses (killed, died of wounds or missing) were:—

1920	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,893
1921	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,032
1922	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	636
1923	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	298
1924	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	239
1925 (January 1 to July 15)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	39
1925 (July 15 to October 15)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	585

M. Painlevé and M. Briand appeared yesterday before the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber in order to give certain explanations regarding the Syrian situation. According to the newspapers, M. Briand, replying to the suggestion of M. Berthon, the Communist Deputy, that France should abandon her mandate, declared firmly that such a proposal was out of the question, and that France must fulfil the duties imposed upon her by the League of Nations. During the meeting of the commission, M. Painlevé stated definitely that General Sarrail would not return to Syria, and that he would be replaced as High Commissioner by M. Henry de Jouvenel.

3. This appointment has been recently foreshadowed by many newspapers, but I understand that M. de Jouvenel required some pressing before he accepted the post. It is announced this evening that M. de Jouvenel's nomination was approved at to-day's Ministerial Council, and that M. Briand declared thereat that the Syrian mandate would, directly calm was restored, be reorganised on a basis of the widest autonomy.

I have, &c.  
CREWE.

[E 6884/357/89]

No. 303.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 10.)*

(No. 220.)

Sir,

Damascus, October 25, 1925.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 20 of the 21st instant, and subsequent correspondence by despatch and telegram, I have the honour to submit a summarised account of the recent disorders at Damascus.

2. In the last hours of darkness before dawn on Sunday, the 18th October, a band, about sixty strong, under Hassan-al-Kharrat (see my despatch No. 204 of the 10th instant), entered, unopposed, the Shaghoor (south-eastern) quarter of the town. This is the brothel quarter, and the band apparently obtained facilities for passing unnoticed over the roofs and through the women's apartments. It would be interesting to know what rewards Hassan-al-Kharrat promised to these Damascene Rahabs when the Lord should have delivered the city into his hands. The invaders quietly murdered a number of unfortunate French North African soldiers, and in some cases the women with whom they were lying. The band worked its way slowly towards the Palais Azm, which is in the middle of the bazaars. Rumour, of the winged Oriental kind, preceded the invisible band creeping, with no doubt frequent halts, through the brothel-maze. The bazaars began to close; carriages came dashing across the town with panic-stricken fugitives; alarm was general, but no one could furnish any reason for it, except that of "The Druses are coming!" a cry so often repeated in the last few months that it was hardly believed any longer even by the credulous.

3. The Palais Azm, the famous old 18th century Arab palace, acquired by the French Government for an "Institut français d'Art et d'Archéologie musulmans," is in the middle of the bazaars. One wing of it has recently been arranged for the residence of the French High Commissioner during his visits to Damascus, and for motives of economy the residency formerly in the northern and essentially French and European suburb has been abandoned. General Sarrail had come to Damascus on Saturday, the 17th October, and slept the night in the Palais Azm. On the Sunday morning he had left for Deraa with the French delegate, M. Aubouard, and they both returned to Damascus in the evening after the trouble had begun. But for this fortunate journey to Deraa, General Sarrail might have been caught by the rebels in the Palais Azm. It seems, indeed, that his capture was the object of the skilful and daring manœuvre described above.

4. The band of Hassan-al-Kharrat, who, as an ex-night-watchman, of course knew the town off by heart, got into the Palais Azm shortly after dark, by making a hole in one of the walls. The Syrian guard presumably fled. No French soldiers were in the palace.

5. Before this, however, a small band of Druses from the village of Jeramana, burnt by the French (see my despatch No. 212 of the 15th instant), entered in the late afternoon the town to the east of the Shaghoor quarter by a broadish way running from outside the town along one side of the Jewish quarter to Straight Street. Here the band encountered a French detachment covering the inner end of the Jewish quarter, and fighting began. These Druse villagers were no doubt animated by a spirit of vengeance after the destruction of their homes.

6. About the same time Druses in moderate numbers from the villages immediately south and south-west of Damascus entered the Meidan (southern) quarter. It is said, though there seems to be considerable doubt on this point, that they were led by Nassib Bey Bakri, a Damascene notable who joined the rebels in the Jebel Druse some time ago. His country-house at Jeramana was burnt by the French with the rest of the village. Whether he was actually present or not, he probably had much to do with the organisation of the incursion generally. This band killed some Armenians in a refugee camp in the Meidan, and apparently also a few stray French soldiers.

7. No Druses from the mountain took part in the incursion, though the rebels, to frighten the French and encourage adhesions in the town, spread rumours of large Druse forces approaching. These rumours induced the small French force outside the town on the east to retreat round the city and rejoin the main French positions in the northern suburbs.

8. Thus, on Sunday evening the French troops were in positions north of the old town and covering the Government buildings, the Hedjaz and Northern railway stations and the Salhiyyeh quarter. They also held the citadel situated in the extreme northern end of the bazaars. Detachments were covering the ends of the Jewish and Christian quarters in the extreme east and south-east of the old town.

9. Gradually bad characters in each quarter disarmed or removed the police and joined in the firing. There can be no doubt that both the police and the gendarmerie were extremely lukewarm towards the Government.

10. The French over-estimated the seriousness of the position, mainly because they are so badly informed, and between 5 and 6 P.M. on the Sunday evening they began, without any warning to foreigners, to bombard the town with artillery and from the air. The bombardment lasted, with intermissions, until noon of Tuesday, the 20th October. Practically the whole of the Mussulman town was included in the bombardment.

11. The rebels made no serious attempt to attack the French positions, contenting themselves with aimless firing. The only serious opponents were, perhaps, those from outside. The townsmen who joined in, a few only in each quarter, were quite childish. A single tank, for instance, could have recaptured my quarter, which, owing to the presence of perhaps a score of armed vagabonds, was subjected to a bombardment. In some other quarters, I am told, the local rebels were even fewer. Probably there were never, including both inside and outside elements, more than a few hundred rebels in the town, and half of them were militarily valueless.

12. The French imagined that they were faced with a general revolution. They did not understand that there was no co-ordination whatever between the rebel elements in the different quarters. For instance, Hassan-al-Kharrat and his lieutenant, Dib-us-Sheikh, came into my quarter, but they made no effort whatever to direct the rebel elements there. They both returned after coolly visiting some acquaintances in the quarter.

13. There was no doubt a general hope among the people that this incursion was one of a large Druse force, strong enough to turn out the hated French. Some notables must have viewed the prospect of such a development with considerable complacency; others were probably guilty of complicity. The obvious way to have dealt with the situation would have been to have contained the outside and only active elements, while getting into touch with the notables of the different quarters. These notables, if threatened by the destruction of their houses, would have cleared their own quarters of the insignificant local elements, and the French troops, with more freedom of movement, could then quickly have got rid of the small outside bands. By beginning to bombard immediately, by spreading the bombardment all over the town indiscriminately, no opportunity for early and rapid negotiations was given.

14. Of course, the great French difficulty was the absence of contact with influential local elements. Soubhi Bey, the President of the State of Syria, is a Turk, and his Ministers are largely of Turkish extraction or tradition. They have no influence with the Damascenes, by whom they are disliked. I am sure that things would have been different if Hakki Bey Al Azm, the former Governor of Damascus, had been in power. Though a tool of the French, he is a Damascene of good family and in close touch with the notables of Damascus. He would have made every effort to save his native town and the property of his many friends. He would have had no difficulty in establishing relations with the notables and combining with them measures to stop the fighting. Soubhi Bey was indifferent to the destruction of a town with which he has no intimate connection, and he was, anyhow, unable to exercise any influence over the notables.

15. At 11 A.M. on Monday, the 19th October, the French suddenly and without warning withdrew their detachments covering the ends of the Christian and Jewish quarters, thus leaving them entirely unprotected.

16. After that the French were never in close touch with the rebels. The bombardment continued, and the sharpshooters from the citadel picked off everyone they caught sight of, including several innocent neighbours of mine.

17. The outside rebels left the town on the morning of Tuesday, the 20th October, and some notables, including the Emir Said Jezairli, got into touch with the French, who promised to suspend the bombardment at noon, so that a conference might take place at 3 P.M. The few and scattered rebel townsmen gradually made themselves scarce, and during the last two hours of the bombardment there appeared to be no answering fire whatever from the town.

18. At the conference General Gamelin, who had arrived on the Monday and taken over the control of operations from General Soulé, commander of the troops of the region of Damascus, and M. Aubouard demanded from the notables a fine of £T. 200,000, quickly reduced to £T. 100,000, and 3,000 rifles. If these demands were not satisfied by 1 P.M. on Saturday, the 24th October, the bombardment was to be renewed; meanwhile the town was to be responsible not only for preventing any firing by its inhabitants, but also for preventing any bands from entering. It was not explained how the citizens were to prevent bands from entering a town the whole of whose eastern and south-eastern sides were without any military protection whatever.

19. As was to be expected, the notables would not subscribe to these conditions. The French, as they began to recover from their panic and to realise the immense destruction they had effected, the possibility of considerable foreign claims, the general disapproval of this inhuman treatment of an open town, began themselves to realise the impossibility of another bombardment. They therefore forced the Syrian Government and the municipality to guarantee the execution of the above-mentioned conditions. An official announcement was made on the evening of Friday, the 23rd October, that the bombardment would not take place.

20. Since the cessation of the bombardment there have been sporadic rifle and machine-gun fire and occasional artillery fire towards the outside of the town. Probably this can be accounted for by French soldiers firing at shadows. The northern suburbs are still like an armed camp, with barbed wire and sandbag defences. Such of the bazaars as have not been destroyed remain closed. Many of the merchants have fled or are in hiding.

21. The Palais Azm has been half destroyed by the rebels, who also burnt a house at the end of the Jewish quarter where were some Senegalese. A few neighbouring houses were consumed by the fire. Most of the rest of the destruction was due to the bombardment and deliberate incendiary by the French. The whole of the space between Straight Street and the Hamidiyyeh bazaars, that is to say between the two main arteries of the bazaars, is a mass of ruins. The Meydan and Shaghoor quarters have suffered heavily from the bombardment. Other quarters have suffered less. Several old and valuable houses of Damascene notables have been burnt. The ruin is so extensive that it cannot be enumerated. An inspector of the Banco di Roma, who has been examining the situation with a view to the repercussions on his bank, told me that he estimated the damage from the destruction of buildings and merchandise, &c., at about £1 million. This estimate is confirmed by others. Foreign losses are likely to be considerable. Damascus can be regarded as economically ruined. The loss of human life cannot yet be estimated.

22. The British consulate is in the middle of the Mussulman town. The other consulates are in the northern suburbs, that is to say, within the suburbs more or less covered by French military dispositions.

23. When the firing became audible at the consulate about 5 P.M. on the Sunday, I vainly tried to get into telephonic communication with some responsible authority. Finally, with the help of a Syrian policeman, I managed to get to Salhiyyeh. At the Etat-major I found General Sarrail, M. Aubouard, General Soulé and Soubhi Bey. I had a longish conversation with M. Aubouard and General Soulé, who assured me that the whole thing would be quickly over and that British subjects would be in no danger if they stayed quietly in their houses. I explained my apprehensions about the English colony in the Christian and Jewish quarters. I had already repeatedly pointed out to M. Aubouard the exposed position of these English people (see especially my despatch No. 211 of the 15th instant). I was on this occasion particularly anxious about two ladies, Miss Ball and Miss Alexander, in the Irish Presbyterian Mission School in the Jewish quarter, as well as about two of my countrymen close to them. I begged General Soulé to send someone with me to pass me through the French lines and bring these two ladies out. He refused, saying that he could not take the responsibility of anything happening to me. Both he and M. Aubouard continued to reassure me of the safety of our people.

24. General Sarrail appeared to be taking no part in the direction of affairs. As a matter of fact, he left for Beirut on the following morning with the women-folk of Soubhi Bey. His departure at such a moment excited much comment. On arrival at Beirut he announced, as usual, to various persons, including the United States consul-general, that all was calm at Damascus.

25. I left the Etat-major under the disagreeable impression that the French hardly knew what they were about. I brought into one of the hotels in the Salhiyyeh quarter an English lady, whose house was in the gardens adjoining this district. As various loose characters were roaming about and firing was going on sporadically in these gardens, her house was not the suitable place for an Englishwoman to spend the night in. I then returned to the consulate.

26. Mr. Vice-Consul Vaughan-Russell, whose house is in Salhiyyeh, came to the consulate after the firing began, but arrived just after I had left. An alarmist cavass suggested that I had got into trouble, and Mr. Russell returned to Salhiyyeh to get measures taken to find me. We thus crossed each other on our ways back. We, however, got into telephonic communication, and I told him to stay in Salhiyyeh, where his presence would be most valuable for communications to the French through him by telephone. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation of Mr. Russell's help, of which he was prodigal. With the vice-consul in the Government quarter and the consul in the rebel camp, the British consulate was probably the only authority thoroughly informed of what was going on.

27. I managed to get into communication with the Victoria (British) Hospital and the British Syrian Mission in the Christian quarter, but the French troops barred all passage to the Jewish quarter.

28. Between 9 and 10 P.M. local riflemen disarmed the police of my quarter, which thus passed out of Government possession on the very first day of the trouble and remained in rebel hands until the end of the bombardment. I was thus isolated with only two cavasses and my personal servants. Telephonic communication was fortunately never interrupted.

29. The rebels were quite affable. They held up one of my cavasses, but let him go when he told them who he was. They began to dig a trench across the road in front of my gate, but accepted my advice to make it a little farther off. They stopped a baggage-camionette of the Eastern Transport Company coming from Bagdad, and began to cut the tyres. When, however, the Italian chauffeur declared that he was English, they brought him and the car to the consulate. They even submitted to my expostulations against their firing at aeroplanes, which, I pointed out, would only return to the artillery with indications for the bombardment of our quarter.

30. During the whole of Monday, the 19th October, Mr. Russell, on telephonic instructions from me, harried the French civil and military authorities with a view to inducing them to take some interest in our colony. But the French were too obsessed with imaginary dangers to think of anyone but themselves.

31. Realising that I had nothing to hope for from the French, I got into touch with the Moslems, who, I must record, behaved admirably. Emir Said Jezairli, whom I reminded of the great tradition of his grandfather, the famous Abdul Kadir, the protector of so many Christians during the 1860 massacre, went down to the Christian quarter and reassured the frightened people. The aged Sheikh Bedr-ud-Din, the most learned and most venerated of the ulama, and his son, the kadi, did

likewise. These Moslem interventions assured the Christian quarters against pillage. In other words, it was Islam and not the "Protectrice des Chrétiens en Orient" which protected the Christians in those critical days.

32. I only learnt in the evening of the withdrawal which had taken place in the morning of the troops at the ends of the Christian and Jewish quarters. I at once telephoned to General Soulé and begged him to send troops to protect those quarters. He refused, and said he would have to have an army corps to do such a thing. He spoke vaguely about gendarmes and police being there. I tried to explain to him that these had long ceased to exist in the city. Finally, I enquired whether the only thing to do was to "s'en remettre au bon Dieu." He replied in the affirmative. It was obviously useless to continue the conversation.

33. On the morning of Tuesday, the 20th October, I instructed Mr. Russell to inform M. Aubouard that, as the French would do nothing for our people, I was going down myself to the Christian quarter, and that I hoped his sharp-shooters would endeavour to miss me. After waiting for the bombardment to shift from my quarter, I crossed the town with native guides, who of course knew how to lead me out of reach of French fire. The journey was thus one of no difficulty or danger. Indeed, had I known earlier of the French withdrawal, I would have easily crossed the town on the previous afternoon. While the French troops were still in the city, and internal fighting was in progress, the passage from quarter to quarter was not so simple.

34. When I reached the Christian quarter, the Christians gathered round me much encouraged and full of enquiries. I reached the British Syrian Mission, where were all the ladies of that mission and Miss Ball and Miss Alexander of the Presbyterian school, whom a Canadian, Mr. Ebey, fortunately outside the French lines, had courageously brought by devious ways to the Syrian Mission. When I heard their story, I confess that I had some difficulty in restraining my indignation. A shell had wrecked the sitting-room of the school, while Miss Ball and Miss Alexander were fortunately in the dining-room. Until their rescue these two delicately nurtured English ladies had been crouching for several hours in a wood-cellars under the bombardment. During this time their French sisters had been collected into places of safety. After the withdrawal of the French troops, the Syrian police had conducted all these ladies of both missions to the Victoria Hospital, the safest place in the Christian quarter, and after fearfully performing this last duty had doffed their uniforms and disappeared. A frantic crowd of Armenians and Syrian Christians had invaded the hospital and its grounds. The single English doctor and two English nurses had been powerless to deal with the mob. Finally, just before I came down, the Syrian and Presbyterian Mission ladies had left the hospital and returned to the former mission, in order to encourage the refugees to leave also. When I got to the hospital it had already been cleared. There I found the two British male subjects I had been so anxious about, Mr. Ebey and Mr. Joyce. The whole of the English colony was thus safe. They had all displayed admirable fortitude.

35. The bombardment ceased while I was in the Christian quarter. Then the French, shamed by my message, sent down to look after me Commandant Tommy Martin and M. Béjean, the adviser of police, who arrived in a car bristling with rifles and police. M. Aubouard also sent down a car for me with two gendarmes. I courteously but coldly refused all this tardy assistance, and returned to the consulate on foot with my native guides. There was no longer any danger, as the firing had ceased.

36. This French abandonment of our colony has excited much bitterness among the English here. In defence of the French, it must be mentioned that they also abandoned their civilian hospital in the Christian quarter, with several nuns and French patients. The French military authorities were so full of their own imaginary dangers that they would make no military effort to help the Europeans in the Christian and Jewish quarters.

37. The several thousand British Indians, Irakis, Palestinians, Transjordanians, &c., were of course too scattered to be reached. So far no death among them has been reported to me, though one Palestinian has claimed compensation for wounds in both arms. Their material losses from the bombardment are of course considerable. I had let it be known as far as possible that they could come to the consulate, but few of them cared to risk passing through French fire or perhaps staying in my bombarded quarter.

38. One very delicate feature of this disastrous affair was the attitude of the

people towards the consulate. The fact that the British flag remained flying in the heart of the bombarded city and over the stricken Moslem population created an inevitable feeling of fraternal solidarity. The peaceful Moslem population and the consulate, both equally abandoned by the French, turned to each other for help and counsel. To the terrified people, to the streams of homeless women and children flying from shells and ruined houses, the consulate became the symbol of something reasonable and hopeful in all this frantic and senseless pandemonium. I am sure that, if it had not been politically inexpedient for us to interfere, the consulate could have intervened and settled the business far more quickly than the French artillery. Indeed, I am certain that the more ignorant part of the population is convinced that the consulate alone was responsible for the cessation of the bombardment and for its not being renewed.

39. The danger of this situation is obvious and must be promptly conjured. It is no use trying to close our eyes to obvious facts. The unhappy people of this city have been cruelly wronged through the frantic action of a few soldiers who lost their heads and have ruined a great metropolis of Islam. The French on this occasion have shown themselves unworthy of the mandate confided to them by the League of Nations. The bitterness of the British colony is entirely justified. But the issues at stake are too serious for emotional treatment. Our own vital interests and the prevention of anarchy in all Arabian mandated territories demand a complete Anglo-French solidarity in these parts. A French collapse in Syria opens up prospects for our mandated countries almost too unpleasant to be contemplated. I am, therefore, of the opinion that everything possible should be done to consign this painful story to oblivion. I will make every effort to sink back again into the effacement from which I was momentarily forced by circumstances beyond my control. I will also endeavour to restrain violent criticism of the French. I have already earnestly recommended to Mr. Merton, the "Times" correspondent who has just come here, the importance, in the interests of Anglo-French co-operation, of an extreme moderation in whatever he reports to his paper. I can only hope that the British and Egyptian press will refrain likewise from any excessive indictments.

40. This attitude, however, should not, in my opinion, preclude vigorous action to obtain compensation for the wide material damage suffered by British nationals from this unwarranted bombardment. But this is a subject which requires separate treatment.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 6888/357/89]

No. 304.

*Acting Consul-General Mayers to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 10.)*

(No. 136. Secret.)

Sir,

Beirut, October 27, 1925.

I VENTURE to make some comment on current affairs in Damascus as seen from the special angle of Beirut. There can be no doubt that the news of the dramatic happenings in the capital of the State of Syria came to most people as a severe shock. The general feeling is that something tragic has taken place, and caustic comment is heard on all sides. I am told that criticism in Damascus is bitter, and that all religious sects take part in it. Few voices are heard defending the action of the mandatory Power. In Beirut public sentiment, if less heated, is the same. A wave of disillusionment has passed over us all.

2. Resentment, as far as I can see, is focussed on the person of the High Commissioner. I should not like to say that the passion is justified. It is hinted that the civil power in Damascus looks back regretfully on the ruin the military power has caused during the events of the last few days. Here there is a tendency to take a similar line. I was told the other day by the secretary-general that perhaps the military had gone a little too far. The day of recrimination is coming, and it may be that General Gamelin, commanding the troops in the Damascus area, will be the butt of it. However that may be, the public see at the head of affairs, leading his administration on from one catastrophe to another, a responsible figure about whom there begins to play a baleful light, that of General Sarrail. I have only the merest passing acquaintance with the general, and I have not read what the "Echo de Paris" says about him. But I know that since his arrival in Syria he has sent back to France

a continuous stream of dismissed men who must fatally seek their revenge in working for his downfall. The other day he relieved of his post an officer on his staff on the grounds that he knew too much. Two days ago he dismissed the whole of his intelligence bureau with the exception of its head, because, he said, they were working against him. He sees treason within the palace. Captain Carillet, an ill-omen choice surely, is on the new intelligence staff. It appears to be true—I have it on the word of the secretary-general—that an attempt was made in Damascus when the insurrection started to secure the person of the general. The insurgents are said to have burnt the beautiful Azm Palace because they had heard that General Sarrail was due to spend the night there.

3. If 2 million pounds' worth of damage has been done in Damascus, Beirut will probably have to bear in business losses at least a quarter of that sum, and this will have serious commercial consequences here. Some people, it is true, excuse the bombardment of Damascus on the grounds of military necessity. The common feeling is, however, that the French themselves created that military necessity by their acts since the day when the High Commissioner turned away with contumely the Druse delegation which petitioned him in the matter of their Governor. Next year there may be a famine in the Jebel Druse and the Hauran. It is asked if Syria has really deserved her fate.

4. The Moslems protected the Christian quarter in Damascus when without warning the French had abandoned it. This gives the Christian communities seriously to think, although at bottom they do not trust the Moslems. In Damascus they are said to have lost all confidence in the mandatory Power. Here the Christians are still partisans of the French connection, but they have given up long ago all hope in the present representative of the republic. No one except a handful of sycophant journalists and political aspirants, and such French and foreign officials as by the nature of their posts are bound to speak fair of him, recount anything but humorous anecdotes of General Sarrail. It is not for me to discuss the choice which appointed him High Commissioner in Syria. I will, however, confess to a personal opinion that if the general remains at his post here he is bound to bring his own country and the mandatory system into disrepute, if the harm is not already done.

5. With regard to the failure to warn foreign residents in Damascus before the bombardment and to give them adequate protection during it, I know from personal experience that the American consul in charge here, under whom the whole of American interests in Syria come, has been very busy despatching lengthy and earnest wires to Washington on the subject, and the indications are that the Department of State will take up a firm attitude in it. I think it likely, from what I hear, that the Italians will also demand indemnity in Paris for damage at Damascus to life and property.

6. The American consul in charge told me some time ago that he had asked for two destroyers to be at hand in case of need. A recent Havas telegram in the local press announced the departure of these ships for Alexandria. The telegram adds that they are sent at the request of the American consul in Beirut, and goes on to say in the accents of the Department of State that "les fonctionnaires du Département d'Etat espèrent qu'il sera inutile d'ordonner aux vaisseaux stationnant à Alexandrie de se rendre en Syrie." This, I take it, is for both American and French consumption. I hardly think that the French High Commission will like this communiqué, in view of its constant under-statement of the need for anxiety. For my own part, I see no reason as yet to mention the topic of British destroyers. The American request was for ships to be within call in the Mediterranean. I believe that if the need arose there would be no difficulty in securing British naval help from Malta.

7. Judging from the present situation here, there will be no need of such help. Many refugees came to Beirut last week, but some are already returning to Damascus. The Lebanon is calm. The only danger for the moment is of the bands of Druses and malcontents operating round Damascus, extending the sphere of their activities until they penetrate further westward and foment brigandage and lawlessness in such regions as that behind Sidon.

8. The papers to-day record the arrival in Beirut of M. Morineau, a private secretary of M. Painlevé. He has possibly come on a tour of inspection.

I have &c.

NORMAN MAYERS.

[E 6953/357/89]

No. 305.

*Acting Consul-General Mayers to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 11.)*  
(No. 138.)

Sir,  
IN continuation of my despatch No. 136 of the 27th instant, I have the honour to inform you that in a conversation yesterday the secretary-general of the French High Commission imparted to me what I take to be an attempt to vindicate the military measures taken recently in Damascus.

2. He denied that the city had ever been bombarded indiscriminately, or even the rebel portions of it. It had been perceived from the start, he said, that the armour-plate which protected the machine guns used in the street fighting had been penetrated by bullets coming from above, i.e., from windows and housetops. This had led to the subsequent bombing, which, he went on, was only directed on to the guilty points. The cannon, which had fired from a distance of 4,000 metres, had tried to carry out similar orders, but it might have been, taking this distance into consideration, that their shots had fallen a little wide of the mark. It was wrong to say they had bombarded an open town.

3. The gunners, too, he said, had seen the flags of the different nations flying over the consulates and had carefully avoided them. I rejoined that a piece of bomb had fallen into Mr. Smart's courtyard. He told me, too, that the danger to Europeans had been exaggerated. I replied that only the same morning I had had reported to me the case of a British woman, married to a naturalised British subject of Australia, who was at present undergoing an operation in the American hospital here to remove a bomb-splinter or piece of shrapnel which had pierced her forehead. M. Lépissier expressed his regret on hearing this.

4. The secretary-general further declared that General Gamelin in Damascus had been faced with a very serious problem. He alleged that if the insurrection had not been repressed sternly and at once it would in all probability have led to a general massacre of Christians and foreigners. General Sarrail says the same thing. From what I have been given to understand of the motives of the insurgents and the behaviour of the Moslems, it is not at all certain that this would ever have been the case. I did not discuss the point, however. In the second place, M. Lépissier said, the general colonial position of France demanded a quick, crushing lesson to the rebels. The latters' success would have had drastic consequences throughout the Moslem world. These explanations are those which the French papers are probably now printing. I get the impression, however, that the French High Commission here is uneasy about the way public opinion in Europe may discuss the news from Syria.

5. M. Lépissier confessed that the situation still gave much cause for anxiety. He said that reinforcements were coming both for here and Damascus. Military measures had already been taken in Beirut. It is rumoured that these measures consist of the placing of guns in two or three positions dominating the town. In this connection the American consul in charge has written to General Sarrail asking that, in the unlikely case of a bombardment here, the foreign communities should be duly warned through their consuls, and whether, in the event of General Sarrail giving an assurance to that effect, he as doyen of the consular corps may pass the assurance on to his colleagues.

6. The name of the gentleman mentioned in paragraph 8 of my despatch No. 136 is now said to be M. Charles Henry.

I have, &amp;c.

NORMAN MAYERS.

[E 6954/357/89]

No. 306.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 11.)*  
(No. 2376.)

Sir,  
AS I had the honour to inform you in my despatch No. 2359 of the 7th instant, M. Henry de Jouvenel has been appointed High Commissioner in Syria in place of General Sarrail.

2. M. de Jouvenel was born in Paris in 1876, and, after beginning his career as private secretary to several Cabinet Ministers, joined the staff of the "Matin," of which

he is still a member. He was elected a Senator in January 1921 and is a member of the "groupe de la Gauche démocratique." He was Minister for Public Instruction in M. Poincaré's short-lived second Administration from March to May 1924, and has on several occasions represented France at Geneva, having been French delegate on the Council of the League of Nations in 1922 and assistant delegate at the Assembly in 1924 and 1925.

3. M. de Jouvenel has given several interviews to the Paris newspapers during the last few days, outlining the policy which he intends to pursue in Syria. He declares that France's main object in Syria must be to re-establish peace and to reorganise the Government and the administration of the country. With this end the ideas of autonomy and self-government are to be encouraged. The function of the army is solely to ensure public security, and it must not be thought that France's position in Syria is based solely on military occupation. France holds Syria under a mandate and not under a military occupation.

4. M. de Jouvenel made it quite clear that France could not on any account surrender the mandate. Such a surrender would be an acknowledgment of defeat and would mean the ruin of France's prestige in the Near East. M. de Jouvenel observed that he was going to Syria with no axe to grind, but only with the idea of serving the mutual interests of France and Syria. He declared that, though he was a free-thinker, he had every respect for religious beliefs. Replying to the question of Syria's neighbours, M. de Jouvenel declared categorically that it was essential for the French and British Governments to work hand in hand in the Near East, and that their interests were closely bound up. As regards Turkey, he had always been in favour of Franco-Turkish friendship, and he intended to carry out a policy of friendly respect for the treaties between the two nations.

5. M. de Jouvenel added that before accepting the appointment he had consulted M. Herriot, M. Blum and M. Poincaré in order to assure himself of their support. All three had concurred in his nomination, although M. Poincaré made the reservation that he would have preferred to see General Weygand return to Syria.

I have, &c.  
CREWE.

[E 6967/357/89]

No. 307.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 12.)*

(No. 226.)

Sir,  
Damascus, October 31, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I have addressed to the French delegate regarding a complaint made by General Sarrail, to the effect that I had spread panic at Damascus by announcing that the town was going to be bombarded a second time, and that British subjects should leave at once.

2. This complaint was first brought to my notice privately by Mr. Mayers, British acting consul-general at Beirut, to whom I forwarded, for communication to General Sarrail, a private explanation, in the same sense as, but slightly less developed than, the enclosed official letter to M. Aubouard. The general replied that my private letter had arrived too late, and that he had already forwarded a complaint to Paris. I therefore had no recourse but to take the matter up officially.

3. I also enclose copies of two private letters from the British liaison officer, to whom the complaint was made with that intemperance so characteristic of General Sarrail. I think that no useful purpose would be served by my seeing the general and endeavouring to convince so irrational a person of his mistake. Moreover, the language used towards me was so discourteous that I do not feel inclined to go out of my way to see him.

4. I also enclose copies of the two notices which have occasioned this outburst. As will be seen from the enclosed letter to M. Aubouard, these notices were put up as the direct result of definite notifications made to me by the French delegation. Although I did not believe personally that the French would be so foolish as to renew the bombardment, I obviously could not disregard these very precise indications given me by the responsible authorities with a view to withdrawing British nationals from danger in case of a second bombardment.

5. I was at first under the impression, when talking with M. Aubouard on the morning of Thursday, the 22nd October, that he was making these very definite

proposals because he thought that, if I was convinced of the possibility of a bombardment, I might use my influence with Arab notables to induce them to pay the fine imposed, and thus avert another disaster. Later, however, from remarks made to Mr. Russell by M. Aubouard, who said that he had, in speaking to the general over the telephone, energetically opposed a renewal of the bombardment, I was inclined to think that the delegation was, perhaps, not quite sure whether the bombardment might not be renewed. General Sarrail is reported to have been very aggressive after the first bombardment. It is rumoured that he was personally much chagrined by the fact that the invaders should have made a deliberate effort to trap him.

6. Anyhow, it was not for me to examine the motives impelling the delegation to make concrete proposals to me for the removal of British subjects out of reach of another bombardment. I merely followed the delegation's indications and put up the notices so as to be able to get as many British subjects out of the town as possible, if the bombardment actually were to become a reality.

7. It is obvious that this complaint is of an entirely irrational nature, and it should be regarded as merely an indication of a more general desire to find some pretext for securing my removal from Damascus.

8. Among the French colonials at Damascus has grown up one of those remarkable legends, the very absurdity of which defies all argument. To these strong but primitive imaginations I have become a Machiavellian figure, possessed of a profound knowledge of French and Arab mentalities and affairs, gifted with diabolic patience and suavity, never making a mistake, and always putting the French in the wrong, working surely and successfully to overthrow France in Syria. About a week ago a French official told my United States colleague that he had a great admiration for Mr. Smart, who, without making a single diplomatic error during these troubles, had succeeded in his purpose of manœuvring the French into the most disastrous position possible. Any comments on these childish fantasies would seem superfluous.

9. No particular complaints, beyond this obviously absurd one about the enclosed notices, have been formulated by any responsible person. Mr. Mayers, in a private letter, tells me that it was rumoured in French circles at Beirut that I had declared that, if the French could not restore order in the town, I would call in the Sultan of Nejd to do so. Certain geographical difficulties in the way of Nejdian succour would have occurred to anyone less ignorant than French officials in Syria.

10. At Damascus I have had vague intimations of two points on which the French appear to be pondering.

11. Firstly, my attempts to save the British colony in the Christian quarter during the fighting involved relations with non-combatant Moslems. My action was entirely limited to protecting British civilians left behind the rebels by the withdrawal of the French troops. The fact that the Moslems responded to my appeal is enough to make the French suspect that an influence exercised in this sense may also have been used in anti-French directions.

12. Secondly, I have heard rumours that I am being held solely responsible for the collective consular note, copy of which was enclosed in my despatch No. 216 of the 23rd instant. The reason of this belief seems to be that none of my colleagues know French sufficiently well to draft such a detailed note correctly. I need hardly insist on the inadequacy of such an argument. The matter of the note was evolved from the usual verbal discussions at such consular meetings, each person making various suggestions, some of which were adopted and others rejected. As usual, my influence was exercised to moderate my United States and Italian colleagues, whose always rather uncharitable feelings towards the French were considerably embittered by the abandonment of their nationals in the recent fighting. I was of course much embarrassed by my previous attitude (see the third paragraph of my despatch No. 211 of the 15th instant) in steadily evading, in French interest, my colleagues' not unreasonable requests for a consular meeting to consider the danger to foreign subjects during the three preceding months.

13. After the meeting, I, as doyen, drafted the note on the lines agreed upon, and it was then subjected to a further collective revision.

14. However, I am prepared to accept full responsibility for a note to which I put my signature. The terms of that note have greatly irritated the French, but I remain of the opinion that it was impossible by any milder means to bring home to them the necessity of providing protection for foreigners. For three months I had been almost sacrificing the safety of my colony and incidentally that of other foreign colonies to my resolution to play up to the French policy of concealment

(see my despatch No. 211 of the 15th instant for the grave responsibilities which I had incurred in this respect both towards my own countrymen and my colleagues). This responsibility was all the graver because, not being so badly informed as the French, I was fully aware of the danger of an incursion from the east, as soon as the bands of Nassib Bey Bakri and Hassan-al-Kharrat appeared in the eastern gardens. Foreseeing this peril, but of course never foreseeing the French bombardment, I was careful, in the note to the French delegate, enclosed in my above-mentioned despatch, to give exact geographical details about my colony and to request military protection at certain points. The delegate's reply, enclosed in my despatch No. 214 of the 17th instant, amounted to a refusal of military protection, but contained vague assurances of general measures of security. Even then, in spite of my anxiety, I sent him the friendly reply also contained in my despatch No. 214 of the 17th instant, confiding myself to his judgment for general measures of protection and for particular measures which might become necessary "à un moment donné et sur des points déterminés." When the trouble came on the very points indicated to him, not only were no measures of protection taken, but not one single French official even took the trouble to telephone to me and warn me of the danger coming upon our people. After failing myself to get into telephonic communication with the authorities responsible for our protection, I had, after the bombardment had begun, to make my way, with the help of a native policeman, through the town, already falling into rebel hands, to the Etat-major, where were all the supreme civil and military authorities solely concentrated on French concerns, totally oblivious of the necessity of doing anything to warn or help foreigners. But I need not continue the story, which is already familiar to you. This bitter experience had taught me that nothing but the strongest language could awake the French authorities to their responsibilities towards foreigners and thus perhaps make less insecure the future of my colony at Damascus. I therefore associated myself with my colleagues in the collective note, which apparently is now attracting French resentment against me alone.

15. Yet all these things are details in view of the general French delusion about me. If it is not one thing, it will be another on which the French will fasten to incriminate me. I am inclined to believe that British consular appointments to Damascus should be yearly. After one year the French will have come to the conclusion that any British consul here is responsible for all the troubles their own muddling continually brings on them.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

Enclosure 1 in No. 307.

Consul Smart to French Delegate.

M. le Délégué,

Damas, le 30 octobre 1925.  
J'AI appris de l'officier de liaison britannique à Beyrouth que son Excellence le Général Sarrail s'est plaint vivement de ce que j'ai créé une panique en annonçant publiquement qu'on ne pouvait rester à Damas sans danger, parce que l'on courait le risque d'un second bombardement. Par conséquence, les trains auraient été bondés de fugitifs.

Je me permets de faire remarquer d'abord que n'importe quelle déclaration faite par moi aurait pu contribuer fort peu à augmenter une panique créée par le premier bombardement. En effet, dès le soir du mardi 20 courant, c'est-à-dire, après la cessation du feu, la gare a été assiégée par une foule cherchant à quitter Damas. M. Brossard, Directeur du Chemin de Fer, dont le concours a été si précieux à moi et à mes ressortissants, pourra vous fournir à ce sujet tous les renseignements nécessaires.

Ensuite, je me permets de vous faire remarquer que les deux avis que j'ai fait afficher le vendredi 23 courant dans la salle d'attente du consulat de Sa Majesté britannique ont été exposés pour donner suite aux arrangements conclus avec la délégation française elle-même. Je crois nécessaire de résumer les pourparlers qui ont abouti aux deux avis susmentionnés.

Dans la matinée du jeudi 22 courant, au cours de la promenade en automobile que j'ai eu le plaisir de faire avec vous, à l'occasion de vos gracieuses visites aux établissements anglais, vous m'avez dit que, si les conditions françaises n'étaient pas exécutées, un coup de canon serait tiré à blanc le samedi 24 courant à midi et que, si

cela ne produisait pas l'effet souhaité, le bombardement recommencerait à 1 heure de l'après-midi. Vous avez bien voulu m'offrir l'hospitalité de votre maison et vous avez proposé l'hôpital militaire français à Salhiyyeh comme asile pour les ressortissants britanniques. Tout en vous remerciant de votre aimable invitation, j'ai répondu que je ne pouvais pas abandonner le consulat. L'officier français qui nous accompagnait a demandé si dans des pareils cas il n'était pas possible de retirer le pavillon britannique. Je lui ai expliqué que, si je quittais la ville, il était fort possible que des ressortissants britanniques, restés en ville et en danger, vinrent au consulat pour être secourus et le trouveraient abandonné. Il m'était, donc, nécessaire de rester dans la ville avec ceux de mes ressortissants qui n'auraient pu la quitter.

Dans l'après-midi du même jour j'ai envoyé Mr. Vaughan-Russell, vice-consul de Sa Majesté britannique, à votre bureau pour arranger avec vous comment et où se rendraient les ressortissants britanniques dans le cas du bombardement dont la possibilité m'avait été indiquée par vous dans la matinée. Comme vous étiez sorti, Mr. Russell a vu M. Délélée-Desloges, le délégué adjoint, qui a proposé la Caserne Hamidiyyeh hors de la ville comme lieu d'asile pour les ressortissants britanniques, mais il a ajouté qu'il devait d'abord en parler à vous. Plus tard dans l'après-midi, M. Délélée-Desloges, m'a téléphoné pour me dire que l'arrangement conclu avec vous était le suivant :

M. Délélée-Desloges devait me téléphoner à 9 heures du matin le samedi 24 courant pour me faire savoir si le bombardement devait avoir lieu ou non. Si le bombardement devait avoir lieu, il m'indiquerait l'endroit hors de la zone de danger, probablement la Caserne Hamidiyyeh, où les ressortissants britanniques pourraient se rendre.

Personnellement je ne croyais pas qu'un second bombardement aurait lieu. Cependant je ne pouvais pas évidemment me refuser à suivre les indications qui m'avaient été données par la délégation française, représentante responsable de l'autorité mandataire à Damas. Donc le vendredi 23 courant j'ai fait exposer les deux avis en question.

Le premier avis, plus général, conseillait aux sujets britanniques de quitter Damas en vue de l'insécurité actuelle, et de faire inscrire leurs noms au consulat pour des places sur les trains de Beyrouth. Cette inscription était rendue nécessaire par le fait que, bien avant ces avis, les trains étaient bondés de gens cherchant à quitter Damas. D'ailleurs, pour assurer le départ des sujets britanniques, des négociations avaient déjà eu lieu entre la délégation et le consulat, et, bien avant l'affichage des avis en question, la délégation et la Direction du chemin de fer ont bien voulu faire des arrangements pour que des ressortissants étrangers (américains, italiens, britanniques) pussent avoir la préférence sur les indigènes pour des places dans les trains, qui dès le mardi 20 courant étaient trop bondés pour accepter tous les voyageurs se présentant à la gare. En conclusion, l'avis indiquait que, dans le cas de bombardements où d'autres dangers sérieux, les ressortissants britanniques, n'ayant pu quitter Damas, pourraient venir au consulat, sans garantie contre un bombardement, ou s'inscrire pour être admis à Salhiyyeh dedans les lignes françaises.

Le second avis, plus particulier, conseillait aux ressortissants britanniques, en vue de la possibilité du renouvellement du bombardement, de se présenter au consulat à 8 heures du matin le samedi 24 courant pour être dirigés hors de la zone de danger.

Le samedi 24 octobre, vous avez dit à Mr. Merton, correspondant du "Times," que j'avais créé une panique en affichant un avis que le bombardement allait être renouvelé, et que les sujets britanniques devraient donc quitter la ville. Mr. Merton n'en ayant parlé, je vous ai envoyé Mr. Russell avec les originaux des deux avis préindiqués. J'ai chargé Mr. Russell de vous faire remarquer que ces deux avis avaient été exposés comme résultat des arrangements très précis conclus par le consulat avec la délégation. Vous avez bien voulu convoquer M. Délélée-Desloges, qui, devant Mr. Russell, vous a rappelé les arrangements qui, sous votre direction, avaient été conclus avec le consulat. Vous avez alors dit à Mr. Russell que des renseignements inexacts vous avaient été communiqués au sujet du texte de ces deux avis.

De cet exposé, dont je vous prie d'excuser les longueurs, il ressort que les deux avis en question n'ont été que l'aboutissement des notifications faites au consulat par la délégation.

Aussitôt que vous m'avez notifié que le second bombardement n'aurait pas lieu, j'ai fait retirer tous les deux avis, c'est-à-dire dans la soirée du vendredi 23 courant.

Selon une lettre que j'ai reçue de Mr. Mayers, gérant du consulat général de Sa Majesté britannique à Beyrouth, son Excellence le Général Sarrail, tout en admettant la régularité de ces avis, serait sous l'impression que j'ai fait répandre dehors par des

agents le contenu de ces avis. Si des renseignements dans ce sens ont été fournis à la délégation, ils sont tout à fait inexacts. Aucune publicité n'a été donnée par mon entremise à ces deux avis hors du consulat de Sa Majesté britannique.

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire savoir que je transmets une copie de cette lettre à mon Gouvernement.

Veuillez agréer, &c.

W. A. SMART.

Enclosure 2 in No. 307.

Major Salisbury-Jones to Consul Smart.

(Secret and Personal.)

Dear Mr. Smart,

Beirut, October 30, 1925.

IN continuation of my previous letter on the subject, the following are more complete details of what occurred : General Sarrail rushed into my office in a furious temper and proceeded to pour forth the words which I have endeavoured to repeat below. I may mention that these outbursts have become a common every-day occurrence in the Grand Sérai. The general has taken to the somewhat undignified habit of spending his mornings wandering from office to office, and nearly every morning his voice can be heard resounding through the corridors from whichever unfortunate office happens to have received the brunt of the general's rage on that particular morning. The following is the gist of what the general said to me :—

" Your consul, Mr. Smart, in Damascus has been creating panic. He has been telling people that it is not safe to remain in Damascus. As a result of his action, the station there is filled with thousands of refugees trying to get away, and saying that the British consul has advised them to leave. If Mr. Smart were not the consul of a friendly Power, I should ask for his removal to-morrow."

It is impossible to get a word in edgeways on these occasions, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I was able to refrain from losing my temper, which I realised would serve no useful purpose. I told the general that this was no affair of mine and that he must say such things to Mr. Smart himself. I told him that I could not listen to such words against one of my countrymen, and I endeavoured to stop the conversation at this point. But the general raved on like a mad bull. I then insisted that you had only done your duty, and while in the middle of telling him this, the general just walked away, waving his arms in the air. It is quite impossible to do anything with him on these occasions. He is more like a wild animal than a human being.

I later went to see M. Lépissier, whom I knew that it would at least be possible to talk to, whatever his attitude might be. To my surprise, I found him almost as angry as the general. Being in complete ignorance of the facts, I asked him what had happened. He told me that you had stuck up panic notices in the consulate. I said that I felt quite sure you had only done what was your clear duty and responsibility towards British subjects. I told him of the general's language to me. He then appeared to become rather alarmed, and expressed the earnest hope that things would be settled amicably.

Later I saw Commandant Dentz, who also appeared angry. He made a series of the most childish remarks imaginable. I repeat the most childish. " Mr. Smart knows Arabian affairs too well. He ought not to be consul at Damascus." Is it possible to cope with such people ?

Yours sincerely,

A. G. SALISBURY-JONES, Major,  
Liaison Officer.

Headquarters, French Army of the Levant.

Enclosure 3 in No. 307.

*Major Salisbury-Jones to Consul Smart.*(Secret and Personal.)  
Dear Mr. Smart,*Beirut, October 30, 1925.*

ANOTHER storm has just taken place in my office. This time I thought that the roof would be blown clean off the whole of the Grand Sérai. I caught General Sarrail taking his morning "constitutional" along the corridor and he came into my office. I told him that it had naturally been my duty to convey to you the gist of the unpleasant things that he had said about you the other day. I said that I had received a reply from you and, as you desired, I conveyed to him verbally the substance of your letter.

Then the fireworks started! He told me that he had always treated me frankly, telling me exactly what he thought. Now he had discovered that I could not be trusted. He bellowed at me that he would never tell me anything again, and prepared to depart. I thought that it would be better not to leave matters at that, and I succeeded in fetching him back. I then started off in my turn. I said that all of us—you, the British consulate-general here and myself—had worked day and night to secure Franco-British co-operation. But there was a point beyond which we could not go. I told him that I felt sorely tempted to leave Syria myself to-morrow.

The general then appeared to cool down. He told me that he thought I realised by now that he was often somewhat brutal in his manner of saying things. In the same way that he never gave an officer four days' but always thirty days' arrest, he never minced matters when he had something to say. He said that he had no grudge against you, and thought that you had acted in accordance with what you thought was your duty. He would be quite pleased to see you. And so we parted as amicably as was possible under the circumstances.

I do not want you to think that the above incidents have compromised me in my military duties here. I do not consider that General Sarrail is the chief man who counts here at the moment. If my relations with him remain less cordial than they have been hitherto, my relations with his staff remain the same, and this is almost more important.

I do not know what your own opinion is, but I hope you will see your way to an amicable settlement as far as possible. General Sarrail cannot be treated as a normal individual in these times.

In order not to embarrass you, I am naturally not communicating these things to anyone else except Mayers, but please make whatever use you like of this and my first letter of even date.

Yours sincerely,  
A. G. SALISBURY-JONES, Major.

Enclosure 4 in No. 307.

(i)

NOTICE.

IN view of the possibility of a renewal of the bombardment of the town at 1 P.M. to-morrow the 24th October, British subjects are advised to present themselves at the consulate to-morrow at 8 A.M. in order that an effort may be made to place them outside the danger zone. They must bring their passports with them and some provisions.

W. A. SMART, Consul.

Damascus, October 22, 1925.

(ii.)

NOTICE.

BRITISH subjects are advised, in view of the present unsecurity, to leave Damascus. They will remain at Damascus at their own risk.

If they will inscribe their names at the consulate, efforts will be made to secure for them train accommodation to Beirut.

If they cannot get away immediately, they are free, in case of bombardments or other serious trouble, to come to the consulate, but they must bring their food with them. His Majesty's consul cannot guarantee that they will be sheltered from bombardments at the consulate. If they wish to go to Salhiyeh within the French lines, they should inscribe their names immediately at the consulate.

W. A. SMART, Consul.

Damascus, October 22, 1925.

No. 308.

*Consul, Damascus, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 12.)*

(No. 31.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Damascus, November 12, 1925.

MY despatch No. 226.

As stated last week in press telegrams, General Sarrail is reported to have declared to the correspondent of the "Petit Parisien" at Alexandria that the British consul was responsible for a panic at Damascus because he placarded the town with excited notices. The statement is totally inexact. Normal notices were affixed of late in the waiting-room of the consulate only, and based on definite notifications made to me by the French delegation with a view to the removal of British subjects out of the danger zones in case of renewal of the bombardment of 24th October in the eventuality of the town's non-compliance with the French conditions.

Notices were withdrawn as soon as the delegation notified me that the bombardment would not take place.

I hope it will be possible to publish a *démenti*.

No. 309.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Consul Smart (Damascus).*

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, November 12, 1925.

MY telegram No. 20 of 3rd November: Emir Said.

French Government are informed by French High Commissioner that judicial enquiry has been opened in consequence of recent events, and that although Emir has been placed under police surveillance, his arrest has never been contemplated.

They have instructed High Commissioner to enjoin on French authorities at Damascus close co-operation with you for the purpose of safeguarding British subjects.

No. 310.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 13.)*

(No. 64.)

(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, November 13, 1925.

FOLLOWING for Air Ministry from liaison officer:—

" Lebanon causing anxiety. Efforts being made to rouse Lebanon Druses. Few troops available in the area.

" (Repeated to Palestine.) "

No. 311.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Consul Smart (Damascus).*

(No. 23.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Foreign Office, November 13, 1925.*

I HAVE followed with great interest your reports on the course of events at Damascus.

You have had to contend with great difficulties, and it has been a source of satisfaction to me to see with what sound judgment, tact and courage you have acted at each stage of the crisis. Your conduct has my warm approval.

No. 312.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Consul Smart (Damascus).*

(No. 24.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Foreign Office, November 13, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 22 of 12th November: Abdul Kader family.  
End of first sentence should read:—

"Although Emir Taher has been placed under police surveillance, arrest of Emir Said has never been contemplated."

No. 313.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 15.)*

(No. 33.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Damascus, November 15, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 31.

Semi-official newspaper, the "Syrie" of Beirut, has twice repeated publicly personal attacks of General Sarrail against me which are full of inexactitudes.

As the natives know the paper is the organ of High Commission, and that, rightly, in my opinion, news disagreeable to the French is freely excluded from it, publication of such personal attacks are bound to encourage native hopes of Anglo-French disagreement. Such an illusion is particularly dangerous to France and more ultimately to us.

I have represented to the French authorities that, as it is diplomatically unusual to publish matters under reference to our respective Governments, I am deprived of the right to reply and hope that the High Commission will defend me by suitable *démenti* of a nature to dissipate the above-mentioned impression.

This development is due partly to campaign indicated in my despatch No. 226, seventh paragraph, and partly to the desire of General Sarrail to represent the bombardment of Damascus as a trivial and innocuous affair only magnified by my incorrect notices.

No. 314.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 16.)*

(No. 34.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Damascus, November 16, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 27, and my despatch No. 238 of 12th November on the way.

Violent anti-French press campaigns in Egypt and Palestine are gravely compromising future of Anglo-French relations in Syria, as it is difficult to convince the French here that we cannot restrain the campaigns. Whatever may be possible or not in Egypt, I earnestly hope that High Commissioner in Palestine may, armed if necessary with special temporary powers, be able to put an end to agitation in Palestine, which will cause Anglo-French estrangement here and eventually recoil on ourselves.

(Repeated to Jerusalem, No. 14, and Cairo.)

No. 315.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Consul Smart (Damascus).*

(No. 25.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, November 16, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 31 of 12th November: Accusations by General Sarrail in press against Mr. Smart.

This matter is being taken up seriously with the French Government, and I await their reply before deciding question raised in last paragraph.

[E 7099/357/89]

No. 316.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 18.)*

(No. 228.)

Sir.

*Damascus, November 2, 1925.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 220 of the 25th ultimo regarding the bombardment of Damascus, I have the honour to report that the anarchy in the surrounding country has become too widespread for detailed description.

2. In the Ghouta and the Merj, the garden districts which form the eastern part of the Damascus oasis, a French expeditionary force, consisting of foreign legionaries, Moroccan cavalry and Circassian irregulars, went out to chase the bands and plundered some villages, among which are reported to be Ghizlanieh, Hijaneh, Tell Meskin, 'Uteyba, Housh-al-Farah. I witnessed the return of this force through the Shaghour quarter, as I was, with a French representative, inspecting British damages from the bombardment. The soldiers were laden with loot. These repeated spectacles of French troops bringing loot through the town exercise a very demoralising influence on the population.

3. These expeditions into the Ghouta and the Merj appear to be worse than useless. The bands, of course, do not wait for the troops but decamp, leaving the villages, whether guilty of complicity or innocent, to be pillaged and ruined by the troops, which then return to the town. Each expedition merely adds to the number of homeless, ruined men, who inevitably swell the bands.

4. North of this eastern garden area, all along the Eastern Anti-Lebanon, band rule is momentarily supreme. Kalamun, Maarra, Seydneya, Rankous, Maloula Jeroud, Yabrud, Nebk, Dair Atiyyeh, to mention a few typical places, have either been attacked or occupied by the bands of Nassib Bey Bakri, Hassan-al-Kharrat, Ramadan Shalash and Jumaa Sausak. At Nebk the rebels even set up a humorous Provisional Government. Movements are threatened towards Homs and Rayak, the French air force base.

5. In the Wadi-al-Ajam an effort is apparently being made by chiefs from the Jebel Druse to organise the Druse villagers on the slopes of Mount Hermon with a view to more effective action against the French. A French force has been sent out and centred at Katana, the capital of the Wadi-al-Ajam, whence presumably operations are contemplated against the insurgents.

6. Druse bands from the mountain are said to be descending with a view to co-operation with the above-mentioned band leaders. Rumours are current of such Druse arrivals in the Ghouta and in the neighbourhood of Kisweh.

7. It is said that a serious movement is contemplated against the Beirut-Damascus Railway. Already such movements are reported against the Damascus-Deraa line.

8. To-day there has been a panic in the town, which seems to have been made apprehensive by the above-mentioned activities of the bands and by signs of French military preparation in the northern suburbs to repel an incursion. The Meydan quarter is said to have received a threatening message from the rebels that it will be severely treated if on the next incursion it fails to co-operate with the invaders as on the last occasion. Merchants have again begun to remove to their houses their goods which they had partially brought back to the bazaars.

9. The Christian quarter, lying open to the Merj and the Ghouta, is, as far as I have been able to ascertain from personal inspections, only protected by several military posts, at the British and French hospitals, at the eastern end of the quarter, and even these posts are subject to withdrawals.

10. Needless to say, the French authorities have given me no indication as to

whether they do or do not anticipate any further incursions. It is, anyhow, obviously useless to count on French protection for the moment.

11. I to-day sent a message to Sheikh Badr-ud-Din, the most influential of the ulama, to the effect that I counted on him to allay the panic in the Christian quarter, where my colony was. He replied that he would use his influence to protect that quarter. He enquired what he could say to the unfortunate peasants whose villages were being destroyed by the French troops because bands had forcibly quartered themselves on such villages. I returned no answer to the enquiry.

12. Amir Said Jezairli to-day renewed to me his assurances of assistance for the protection of the English in the Christian quarter, whom I have advised to collect at the British hospital in the event of another incursion.

13. In view of the impotence of the French, I believe that it is now almost dangerous to ask for military protection. After the bombardment—that is to say, after the danger was momentarily over—fifteen Senegalese were quartered at the British hospital, but subsequently removed, to be replaced after nearly a week's interval by a North African guard. The Moslems of an adjoining village, on whom these Senegalese fired under a misapprehension, were extremely indignant, and told the matron that the hospital was under Moslem protection. Weak detachments in the Christian quarter may attract rebel attacks and involve British subjects in more danger than they would be in if left to themselves and native protection.

14. I may mention that on Tuesday, the 20th October, after I had been for a long time in the Christian quarter (see the 35th paragraph of my despatch No. 220 of the 25th ultimo), the French, getting ashamed, sent some tanks down Straight Street, which traverses the whole town, to protect the above-mentioned quarter. These tanks went down Straight Street, firing off their small guns right and left, until they found themselves at the Bab Sharki (eastern gate) and outside the town. The soldiers then enquired where was the Christian quarter, and to their regret learnt that they had already crossed the eastern end of it and killed two inoffensive Christians. One of their shells hit the street wall of the British Syrian Mission, which until then had managed to get through all the trouble untouched. It will, therefore, be realised that French measures of protection in the present state of military incoherence are two-edged weapons and must be invoked with prudence.

15. Of course, what the French really ought to do is to organise a military front well outside the town on the east and south-east. Instead of doing this, nearly all their forces are concentrated in the northern suburbs, with the unfortunate town as a buffer between them and the bands in the Ghouta and the Merj. To the lay mind these military dispositions appear almost comical.

16. The town has delivered the 3,000 rifles demanded. The fine of £T. 100,000 gold has not been paid, and apparently the French propose to collect it by an addition to the taxes. The fine would thus fall on natives and foreigners alike.

17. The Extraordinary Tribunal, composed wholly of natives, which for the last three months has been trying cases of rebellion, has had to be entirely reformed owing, apparently, to the reluctance of its members to conform to the expeditive measures forced on them by the French authorities. The tribunal is now almost exclusively composed of natives other than Damascenes. The enquiry into the recent trouble is being conducted by the French, who merely use the court to give some legal form to sentences decided beforehand. A very large number of arrests have been effected, and, of course, there are the usual exaggerated stories of wholesale and informal executions.

18. Moslem feeling is very bitter about the bombardment, and is shared by the Christians. Things have now come to such a pass that the French can count on no native co-operation, while the general belief in French impotence has everywhere created a most dangerous audacity among the elements of disorder. Nothing but military operations on a large scale can now restore order in Central and Southern Syria.

19. I am personally of the opinion that we should for the present make no further representations to the French for the protection of our colony. Such representations only irritate them against us and are unlikely to have the desired result. The less, therefore, we worry the French at this moment the better will be the prospect of the maintenance of Anglo-French solidarity in the future, when, as I still hope, a more coherent direction succeeds in re-establishing security for all in Syria. Until then we had better count on native goodwill for the protection of our nationals.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 7078/357/89]

No. 317.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 17.)*

(No. 233.)  
Sir,

*Damascus, November 7, 1925.*

IN various European press reports it is stated that on Sunday, the 18th October, only blank shells were fired at the town of Damascus, and that the bombardment with live shells only began on Monday, the 19th October.

2. A very palpable proof of the inaccuracy of this statement is a large fragment of a shell, now in my possession, which fell into the drawing-room of the Irish Presbyterian School at 6 P.M. on Sunday, the 18th October, i.e., less than half an hour after the beginning of the bombardment (see paragraph 3 of my despatch No. 216 of the 23rd ultimo). I subsequently took M. Aubouard, the French delegate, and M. de Littinières, the Adviser of Public Works, to see the ruin effected by this particular shell.

3. I do not know whether any blank shells were first fired, but it is quite certain that the real bombardment began between 5 and 6 P.M. on Sunday, the 18th October, and lasted until noon on Tuesday, the 20th October.

4. I do not desire in any way to revive memories of this sorry affair, which, as urged in the penultimate paragraph of my despatch No. 220 of the 25th ultimo, should, in the interests of Anglo-French solidarity, be consigned to oblivion as soon as possible. I have thought it necessary, however, to place on record the true facts, which show conclusively that, not only was no warning whatever given to foreigners, but that a French shell very nearly killed two English ladies quietly sitting in their dining-room at the very beginning of the trouble.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 7115/357/89]

No. 318.

*Consul Hough to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 19.)*

(No. 78. Confidential.)  
Sir,

*Aleppo, November 5, 1925.*

I HAVE not found it necessary to report on the repercussions which the catastrophe at Damascus of the 18th-20th October has had in this town, for the reason that there have been practically none. In order, however, that you may have a complete picture of the state of Syria, and to supplement the reports which my colleagues at Beirut and Damascus have addressed to you, I have the honour to give a brief outline of such entirely minor events as have occurred.

2. The People's, or National, party contains here certain intelligent members of the very influential Jabri family, and other well-known Moslems. A general raid has been made on their houses for seditious documents. It is not recorded whether any were found. One of the party spent a few days in prison, but was subsequently released. Certain members of the Jabri family, including the well-known Ihsan Bey, former chamberlain to King Feisal, and a member of the Syrian mission to London have found it more prudent to leave the country for a time.

3. Probably to conjure the danger apprehended from this party, all political parties have been officially dissolved. The Aleppo caucuses had, to my eyes, a very amateurish and innocuous appearance in any case.

4. Several reviews of troops have been held, to impress the population. While there was some suspicion that these reviews were slightly of the stage army variety, they may be said actually to have had some effect in quieting the nerves of the more timorous.

5. Public insecurity, especially in the southern parts of the vilayet, has, if anything, got worse. Nothing but sheer necessity would induce me personally to be on the high roads after sunset, nor in the Harim and Idlib districts would I consider daylight much safer. This insecurity is due to sheer casual highway robbery on the part of people who feel vaguely that there has been some weakening of general authority.

6. The Alexandretta district, inhabited by Armenians, Turks, and Turkomans, is entirely unmoved by these events, and, as General Sarail was fond of saying with less exactitude about Syria generally, complete calm reigns there.

I have, &c.  
W. HOUGH.

[E 7121/357/89]

No. 319.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 19.)*  
(No. 2448.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inform you that General Sarrail returned to Paris on Sunday, the 15th November. In spite of the fact that the general returned more or less in disgrace, he was met by several representatives of the Government, a fact which contrasts strangely with the reception accorded to Marshal Lyautey on his recent return to Paris after so long a career spent in the service of his country.

2. General Sarrail's first act, on reaching the station, was to create a scene with his successor, M. de Jouvenel, who was on the platform to meet him. On welcoming the general, M. de Jouvenel stated that he was most anxious to consult with him as soon as possible regarding the situation in Syria, and expressed the hope that he might have the opportunity of a very early meeting with the late High Commissioner. General Sarrail at first returned a blunt refusal, and it was only after considerable persuasion on M. de Jouvenel's part that the former consented to arrange for a meeting with his successor. This scene between General Sarrail and M. de Jouvenel was given great publicity in the press, and attracted much attention, and although the published accounts of it were doubtless much exaggerated, yet it hardly tends to prejudice public opinion in favour of the returning High Commissioner. On the other hand, it was generally considered injudicious of M. de Jouvenel to court this rebuff by going to meet his predecessor.

3. General Sarrail appeared before the Foreign Affairs and Army Commission of the Chamber of Deputies sitting in joint session this afternoon, in accordance with the pledge recently given by the Government. The text of a communiqué giving an official account of the proceedings at the sitting is enclosed herein.\*

4. From the accounts given in this evening's newspapers it would appear that the meeting passed off quite quietly with the exception of one incident, when an Opposition Deputy enquired whether the general was appearing before the Commission "en qualité de Commissaire du Gouvernement ou en inculpé." This question drew the retort from M. Briand that the Government was solely responsible for the situation in Syria, and that General Sarrail was present, with its authorisation only, in order to explain the state of affairs. After emphasising the difficulties with which he had had to deal on account of the various internecine quarrels of the different tribes in Syria, and in particular of different members of the Attrache family, General Sarrail pointed out that the small number of French troops available in Syria had increased the difficulties of the situation. He admitted that the Syrian troops were ineffective, and he complained of the action of several of his subordinates. As regards the case of General Michaud, however, the late High Commissioner maintained that the French reverses had been entirely due to the lack of water and extreme heat.

5. Speaking of the bombardment of Damascus, General Sarrail stated that on the first day eight rounds had been fired into the city, and 150 on the second day in order to stop brigandage. About 135 corpses had been found among the ruins.

6. On being questioned by a member of the commission regarding the attitude adopted by the British authorities, General Sarrail (according to press reports) paid a tribute to the assistance which he had received from the "high officials of the War Office and the Foreign Office," but he complained bitterly of the manner in which "certain British agents," acting independently, had influenced the course of events. In particular, he made certain definite allusions to His Majesty's consul at Damascus, whose action and tendentious despatches had provoked the panic.

7. The general went on to refer to the pan-Islamic movement in Syria, which he hinted was not unconnected with recent events in the Riff and with Moscow. The general also is understood to have said that at least 30,000 soldiers would be required to restore order in the Damascus regions.

8. M. Henry de Jouvenel was yesterday the guest of the Institut colonial français, when he explained the policy which he intended to adopt in Syria. There was no question, M. de Jouvenel stated, of colonising Syria; the problem that had to be solved was that of creating an effective collaboration between the French authorities and the Syrian population. France had no intention of compelling the Syrians to live under an unwelcome and oppressive domination. All that she wished to do was to assist Syria on her road to national independence.

\* Not printed.

9. But before this could be accomplished, it was essential that law and order should be established, and that the present unsettled situation should come to an end. He would regret deeply if it were necessary for him to have to recourse to warlike measures to ensure this, but he would feel it his duty to carry out such a policy should peaceful measures fail. He was confident, too, that the Government and the Ministry of War would put all the necessary troops at his disposal. The choice, however, rested with the Syrians themselves, and he trusted that they would not force him to adopt military methods. He hoped, indeed, that he would be able, with the aid of the Syrian population, to set up the necessary constitution, but once again he must emphasise the fact that such political progress was out of the question until order had been finally re-established.

10. In to-night's "Journal des Débats," the Minister for War, M. Daladier, is reported to have declared that he had no intention of bringing up the numbers of French troops in Syria to the figure of 50,000, but that reinforcements would, nevertheless, be sent to the Near East.

11. I hope shortly to be in a position to inform you of the exact figure of the reinforcements which have been or are about to be sent to Syria, but in the meantime it is clear from the reports in the newspapers that considerable reinforcements are now on their way to Beirut, and that the French military authorities, at all events, if not French public opinion, realise the seriousness of the situation.

12. Interest in the question as evinced in the newspapers will appear to have considerably decreased since General Sarrail's return. This may in part, perhaps, be accounted for by the present financial crisis and by the many other important questions which are now attracting public attention. It must, however, be in large part due to the extraordinary lack of first-hand information regarding the situation in Syria and by the dependence of the French newspapers for such information upon British and Egyptian newsgencies.

I have, &amp;c.

CREWE.

No. 320.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 19.)*

(No. 443.)  
(Telegraphic.)

[By Bag.]

Paris, November 18, 1925.

YOUR despatch No. 3779: Events in Damascus and passage of Turkish troops. I was not able to see M. Briand until late yesterday evening, when I gave him the full sense of the despatch, as he does not follow anything read in English, and left a copy with him.

M. Briand expressed cordial agreement with your recital of past and present relations between our two countries in the second paragraph of the despatch. He said that he would send a full reply in writing, and he did not commit himself personally either to agreement or disagreement with the account given by Mr. Smart of the notices issued from the consulate warning British subjects of a possible renewal of the bombardment. He stated that the whole matter was before the commissions of the Senate and the Chamber respectively, when all the circumstances would be fairly elicited. He dismissed the newspaper reports with a shrug of the shoulders, saying that they were obviously the work of supporters of General Sarrail, who had attempted to act as *caravaneur seul* in Syria, which was the reason for his recall. I pointed out that these were attacks made on a British public servant, but M. Briand so obviously regarded the whole matter as *sub judice* that I thought it useless to ask him to issue a *démenti* from the Government, all the more as he said that the information which would be laid before the two commissions did not entirely support the consul's account of what had occurred.

I may venture to point out that it does not seem clear how the case so lucidly and temperately presented by Mr. Smart can be brought before the parliamentary commissions. General Sarrail is so generally disliked outside the small circle of his enthusiastic admirers that his version of the story is not likely to be accepted: but, on the other hand, his detractors may not find it easy, as patriotic Frenchmen, to adopt by preference the statements made by a British official. As at present advised, I do not see how this difficulty is to be met.

[14003]

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2. In the matter of the Syrian section of the Bagdad Railway, M. Briand was more forthcoming. He promised to enquire closely into the allegations which I set out, saying that he had telegraphed quite ten times with instructions that no Turkish troops should be allowed to go eastwards as reinforcements, but only as reliefs, and that those who did so travel must proceed without arms or stores. He thought there must be some mistake or exaggeration in the account which I had given him, but he repeated his continual anxiety to act in concert with you in this matter, of which he fully realises the importance.

Of course, the reply from the Quai d'Orsay will cover this question as well as that of the riots in Damascus.

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No. 321.

[Nil.]

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No. 322.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 19.)*  
(No. 68.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, November 19, 1925.*

FOLLOWING for Air Ministry from liaison officer:—

"French intend to advance southwards from Jezzin and Rasheya, hoping to cut enemy's retreat in Kuneitra with three battalions sent from Damascus."  
(Repeated to Palestine.)

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No. 323.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 19, 1925.)*  
(No. 446.) [By Telephone.]

Paris.

MY despatch No. 2448.

Further details appear in this morning's "Matin" and "Rappel" of statements made by General Sarrail before the Chamber Commission yesterday regarding the bombardment of Damascus.

2. According to the "Matin" General Sarrail made certain criticisms of the attitude of civil officials, and "especially of British officials, principally Consul Smart, whose conduct was, in his opinion, not foreign to the recent troubles." General Sarrail nevertheless declared his absolute conviction that the foreign officials in question had not precisely obeyed directions from London, but had rather acted on their own authority.

3. According to "Rappel" General Sarrail held Mr. Smart responsible for the panic resulting from the bombardment, stating that Mr. Smart had spread alarmist news and had put up a notice to the effect "that security could not be assured by the French until they had at their disposal at least 30,000 men."

Both newspapers report the expression of appreciation made before the commission by M. Briand regarding the loyal attitude of Great Britain.

Text by bag to-night.

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[E 7420/357/89]

No. 324.

*Notes of an Interview at the Foreign Office between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for the Colonies and M. Henry de Jouvenel, November 19, 1925.*

THE conversation began on the general theme of Anglo-French co-operation in the Middle East and the importance of the mandatory Powers acting together. M. de Jouvenel expressed himself as in entire agreement with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on this point. He said that both General Gouraud and General

Weygand had spoken to him of the absolute loyalty with which all the British officials in that part of the world had co-operated with the French. General Sarrail had given similar praise, but with two exceptions: one, the attitude of Consul Smart in Damascus, and the other, that of Colonel Cox in Transjordania, in allowing Rikkabi Pasha to go to the border to distribute £30,000 in bribes to foster rebellion in Syria. As regards the latter story, which M. de Jouvenel evidently did not take very seriously, the Secretary of State for the Colonies expressed his conviction that Colonel Cox, who was absolutely trustworthy and cautious and not subject to the excesses of pro-Arab sympathy which might characterise a Colonel Lawrence, would never have allowed such a thing to take place. In any case, the money was not there, and both Colonel Cox and Rikkabi Pasha were hard put to it for every penny to carry on the elements of civil administration. On the subject of Mr. Smart, Mr. Chamberlain spoke of the confidence reposed in him by His Majesty's Government and read to M. de Jouvenel an extract from a recent despatch, which showed Mr. Smart's earnest desire to act in cordial co-operation with the French administration and to support French authority. M. de Jouvenel declared that he fully accepted Mr. Chamberlain's view, and, in any case, would make a point of calling on Mr. Smart as soon as he arrived, and treating him exactly as if no difficulty had occurred between him and General Sarrail. He intended in the like spirit to send friendly messages to King Feisal and Lord Plumer as soon as he arrived in Damascus.

The conversation then turned to more specific topics. A question put by Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Amery in regard to frontiers drew from M. de Jouvenel the observation that he had intended to raise this question, and enabled Mr. Amery to explain the situation as regards the Jebel Sinjar and the administrative inconvenience of part of this ridge of hills, with its Yezidi inhabitants, being cut off from the rest by the present arbitrary frontier line. M. de Jouvenel said that that particular point was new to him. He would look into it. What he had had in mind was the Syrian-Turkish boundary. He himself drew attention to the unsatisfactory, undefined situation in the wedge south of Jezireh-Ibn-Omar, where the Tigris had never yet been officially settled as the boundary with Turkey, and where there were actually Turkish posts established in what *vis-à-vis* ourselves was supposed to be French territory. He explained that he was anxious to settle this with Turkey as soon as possible, and that he hoped in this connection to visit Angora, adding that he believed that good relations between himself and the Turks were perfectly consistent with our closest co-operation. Mr. Chamberlain agreed, especially if M. de Jouvenel took the opportunity to impress upon the Turks that there could be no question of driving a wedge between us. But he called attention to the awkwardness, from our point of view, in Irak of these Turkish detachments in French territory. He did not believe in a Turkish attack on Irak, but it was necessary to consider even remote contingencies, and if these detachments were strengthened by further infiltration a difficult situation might arise. If Turkish bands should attack from this side it was important for us to know whether they advanced from Turkish territory into which we could follow them, or whether it was French territory, in which case we must look for protection and redress to the French Government.

In this connection Mr. Chamberlain referred to the unsatisfactory situation as regards the great excess of eastward movements of Turkish troops over the French railway, with regard to which he had that morning had a talk with M. de Fleurieu. M. de Jouvenel thought these were matters with regard to which the representatives of the League of Nations already in that part of the world could easily and naturally be called in. The application of this to any infiltrations into the Jezireh-Ibn-Omar wedge was obvious and was readily accepted both by Mr. Chamberlain and by Mr. Amery as a satisfactory expedient for checking any action endangering the *status quo* in that quarter. On their adding, however, that it did not seem clear to them how this applied to the railway situation, M. de Jouvenel explained that he had to confess that he was in a great difficulty. He must admit after studying the documents that the pledges given to us by French Governments as to the limitation of the passage of troops over their territory were not consistent with the Angora Treaty, and that the only ground he could have for stopping the passage of Turkish troops eastwards was to declare frankly that this was action calculated to affect the *status quo* on the Irak frontier, a matter specially under the care of the League, and that he was acting pending reference to the League, which, by sending its local representatives in Irak or otherwise, could form its conclusion as to whether the movement contemplated was in fact prejudicial to the *status quo*. He declared that

he would definitely take action on these lines if the Turks begin to press for the passage of further troops. Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Amery accepted this solution as it fortified the British view that the League of Nations has a special responsibility to Irak.

Before leaving frontier questions Mr. Amery referred to the unsatisfactory position in the Yarmuk valley, where the railway crossed and recrossed the frontier a dozen times in twice as many miles. M. de Jouvenel promised to look into this.

As regards the situation in Syria itself, M. de Jouvenel expressed the view that he was being given all the troops he needed to restore order, but that his real mission was to negotiate peace. This led to a reference to King Feisal's friendly talks with M. Briand and M. Berthelot. Mr. Chamberlain observed that he believed that King Feisal was perfectly sincere in expressing his wish to be on good terms with the French Government and French authorities in Syria. It was obviously his interest and the interest of Irak to cultivate such relations, "but," Mr. Chamberlain added, without stressing the point, "the King's judgment is sometimes unduly biased by family feeling."

There was one matter to which Mr. Chamberlain referred *en bon ami*, namely, the danger of increasing the number of brigands by destroying villages where brigands had harboured. M. de Jouvenel thanked him for mentioning it.

Just before leaving M. de Jouvenel referred to an official communiqué which he understood had gone out from the Colonial Office, so worded as to imply that the object of his visit to London was to be instructed in the right way of governing Arabs (it was afterwards ascertained, and M. de Jouvenel informed, that no communiqué of any sort had been issued). He suggested that to correct this impression a communiqué should be made with regard to the discussion which had taken place, laying special stress on that part of the discussion which dealt with frontier questions. Mr. Chamberlain thereupon drafted the following communiqué, with which, as well as with the conversation generally, M. de Jouvenel expressed himself as highly satisfied:—

"M. de Jouvenel was received by Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Amery at the Foreign Office this afternoon.

"The French and British Governments, desiring that their close co-operation should extend to all questions in which they have a common interest, thought it useful to exchange ideas on certain questions of common interest to Syria, Irak and Palestine, and especially in regard to the position of that part of the frontier between the mandated territories of the two Powers which has not yet been delimited. This question will be at once studied by the two Governments with a view to its settlement."

L. S. A.  
A. C.

No. 325.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received November 20.)  
(No. 69.)

(Telegraphic.) *Beirut, November 20, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Total of 60 officers and 1,600 men have passed westward up to date.

"Engagement yesterday between rebels and two French battalions 5 miles east of Damascus. Two French killed. Reconnaissances Rasheya area met everywhere by fire."

(Repeated to Bagdad and Palestine.)

No. 326.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received November 21.)

(No. 452.)  
(Telegraphic.)

[By Bag.]

*Paris, November 20, 1925.*

MY telegram No. 443.

M. Briand to-day asked me to call your attention to some remarks he had made before the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber, when General Sarrail's proceedings were under consideration, expressing his sense of the value of British co-operation in Syria and the loyal support which the French Administration had received. He had observed that General Sarrail had made several digs at the British consul, and could only suppose that the personal relations between him and Mr. Smart had become thoroughly unfriendly. But he himself had said everything he could to emphasise his sense of the value of good relationship with Britain.

No. 327.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received November 21.)

(No. 70.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, November 21, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Rebels attacking Rasheya. One French officer taken prisoner. Communications cut. Engagement east of Damascus continues."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

[E 7232/357/89]

No. 328.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).*

(No. 3891.)  
my Lord,

*Foreign Office, November 23, 1925.*

THE French Ambassador called upon me this afternoon and read to me the reply which M. Briand had sent to the communication which I desired your Lordship to make to him on the subject of Anglo-French relations in Syria.

M. de Fleuriau left with me a copy of M. Briand's despatch, and I enclose a transcript for your Lordship's information.

M. de Fleuriau called my attention to the fact that this letter was dated the 20th and had reached him on Saturday, the 21st, but he understood that it had in fact been approved before M. de Jouvenel's interview with Mr. Amery and myself. It was therefore to some extent a twice-told tale.

I asked the Ambassador to thank M. Briand for his communication, and to say that I was gratified, though not surprised, by the terms in which he wrote of Anglo-French co-operation. I felt that with the appointment of a new High Commissioner our difficulties on either side would be at an end, and we might treat the matter as closed.

There was only one point in the letter to which I must recur. M. de Fleuriau had already spoken to me about the complaint of the French Government as to Sir Frederick Lugard's action. I must ask M. de Fleuriau to impress upon M. Briand the British view in regard to this particular matter. Sir Frederick Lugard was appointed to the Mandates Commission by the League of Nations and not by His Majesty's Government. Incidentally I observed that I believed Sir Frederick had in the past examined the British mandates quite as critically and cross-questioned the British representatives with at least equal severity to any which he had shown to the French. He did not consider himself, and he was not in any way under the control of, or responsible to, the British Government. He would resent as personally dishonouring to himself any suggestion on my part that I had a right to control his actions. I had indeed taken advantage of my personal friendship with Sir Frederick Lugard to ask him to lunch with me, and during the luncheon I had spoken of the sensitiveness of the French Government on this question,

and of their feeling that he had unduly pressed them at a moment of great difficulty; but this I had only been able to do as a personal friend and not in any sense as a Minister. I wished, therefore, to make it clear that His Majesty's Government could not accept responsibility for the action of any British subjects who were appointed by the League to its committees and over whom they had no right to exercise any control. To expect them to control ex-officials or other British subjects in such circumstances was not merely to ask of them an impossibility but also, as it seemed to me, to call upon them to do something injurious and derogatory to the League. The League had, for instance, appointed, I believed, a Spanish or Dutch national to some committee in connection with the Port of Danzig, but how impossible would be the position of the League if any Power which thought itself aggrieved by the decision of those gentlemen had felt itself entitled thereupon to address remonstrances to the Spanish or Dutch Governments.

I dwelt upon this matter because I am well aware that foreign Governments do, in fact, habitually exercise a great influence over their own nationals in similar circumstances, and it is important that they should understand the limitations which the traditions of English public life and service, as well as our respect for the League, impose upon us in similar circumstances.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

Enclosure in No. 328.

M. Briand to M. de Fleurieu.

Paris, le 20 novembre 1925.

JE vous ai donné connaissance de la lettre que Mr. Chamberlain a adressée à Lord Crewe le 14 novembre courant, et dont celui-ci m'a laissé copie. Cette lettre exposait les plaintes que croyait pouvoir formuler le Gouvernement britannique en ce qui concerne l'attitude des autorités françaises en Syrie, auxquelles il reproche de ne pas se conformer à la politique de coopération anglo-française décidée entre les deux Gouvernements.

Cette lettre appelle diverses observations que je formulerais en m'inspirant de la franchise avec laquelle Mr. Chamberlain s'est exprimé et que nous permet l'amitié cordiale qui unit deux Gouvernements.

Tout d'abord, j'estime que le changement du Haut-Commissaire en Syrie, la nomination de M. de Jouvenel, sa visite à Londres et les instructions qui lui sont données, la réception et les échanges de vues cordiaux avec le Roi Faysal, ont répondu par avance aux observations et aux desiderata anglais, ainsi qu'à la politique confiante que nous poursuivons en Orient comme sur les autres points du monde. Il ne peut donc s'agir que du passé.

Les agents anglais sur place ne sont pas plus sans reproche que les nôtres. Sans aller plus loin que Mr. Smart, dont l'attitude, inspirée des instructions récentes qu'il a reçues et de la situation politique des deux pays dont le mandat est également en cause, répondra certainement à l'avenir à nos intérêts communs, le Gouvernement anglais ne peut ignorer que cet agent n'a pas toujours pratiqué, lorsqu'il était à Alep en particulier, une politique de sympathie et de bon vouloir. Avant le Général Sarrail, dont toutes les plaintes ne sont pas infondées, le Général Weygand avait dû signaler à Londres l'attitude du consul britannique, qui favorisait une politique hostile au mandat français.

Les agents consulaires n'échappent pas aux passions locales et n'évoluent pas aussi vite que leur Gouvernement. Cela ne justifie pas d'ailleurs les accusations portées dans quelques journaux français contre Mr. Smart, qui a montré en dernier lieu un haut sentiment de son devoir et une plus juste compréhension de son rôle, sans s'attarder aux difficultés qui avaient marqué ses relations avec le Haut-Commissaire français.

Mais Mr. Chamberlain ne peut ignorer ni la liberté complète de la presse française ni les polémiques de politique intérieure qui rendent difficile d'agir sur elle. La situation présente en Angleterre les mêmes caractéristiques, les mêmes attaques injustes et précipitées contre la France et ses agents sans aucune critique sérieuse des événements. La campagne poursuivie contre le mandat français par de très importants journaux anglais, les renseignements inexacts et tendancieux, démesurément grossis, dont elle s'inspire, sont de nature à gêner et compromettre le redressement de la situation. Le Général Dupont, dont la droiture et la raison ne sont contestées

par personne, a signalé à plusieurs reprises les effets nocifs des fausses nouvelles ainsi répandues contre notre action et la situation en Syrie.

En ce qui le concerne, le Gouvernement n'a jamais manqué, comme je viens de le faire devant la Commission du Sénat et de la Chambre, de formuler des déclarations très nettes relativement à la loyauté de la collaboration britannique en Syrie, déclarations qui ont été reproduites par la presse tout entière.

A cet égard, il m'est impossible de ne pas attirer de nouveau l'attention du Gouvernement britannique sur l'attitude véritablement peu amicale et passionnée de Sir Frederick Lugard, membre britannique de la Commission des Mandats à Genève, dont l'indépendance théorique vis-à-vis du Gouvernement britannique ne suffit pas à expliquer l'action. C'est un point du monde et une matière où la solidarité anglo-française doit cependant le plus étroitement s'exercer. Tout récemment encore, sans tenir compte ni de la résolution prise par la commission d'attendre jusqu'à février le rapport français sur le mandat syrien, ni de nos difficultés momentanées ni du remplacement du Haut-Commissaire français par un Sénateur tout inspiré de l'esprit de la Société des Nations, Sir Frederick Lugard a tenté de remettre immédiatement sur le tapis toute la question de Syrie.

Sans insister davantage sur ce point, je voudrais en venir à la question du passage des troupes turques sur laquelle je vous ai à plusieurs reprises prié de fournir les explications les plus complètes au Foreign Office. Le Gouvernement britannique sait que, malgré les termes les plus formels de notre accord d'Angora, nous avons contrôlé autant qu'il était en notre pouvoir le passage des troupes, et ne l'avons autorisé qu'après avoir reçu des Turcs des assurances formelles, à la fois à Angora et à Paris, concernant le caractère de relève des envois de troupes. S'il n'a pas passé en sens contraire, comme nous l'avions demandé tout d'abord, un nombre égal d'hommes libérés, il en est passé un contingent appréciable, et, d'autre part, nous avons reçu du Gouvernement turc les déclarations les plus catégoriques, aux termes desquelles les hommes libérés étant originaires des régions voisines et situées au nord de leurs garnisons, ne pouvaient être libérés que sur place. Le Gouvernement turc nous a exposé également que c'est en raison de la situation du Kurdistan, naguère encore livré à une insurrection très grave, qu'il jugeait nécessaire d'éliminer des troupes de cette région, tous les éléments pouvant avoir des affinités avec les Kurdes et de les remplacer par des soldats de race turque. En présence de ces explications et surtout des assurances formelles et réitérées qui nous étaient données, il était impossible, en raison de nos accords, d'agir autrement que nous ne l'avons fait, en nous conformant d'ailleurs au désir qui nous avait été exprimé tout spécialement par le Gouvernement britannique, c'est-à-dire de retarder autant que possible les passages dont il s'agit. Je n'ai pas besoin de rappeler qu'en outre toutes les précautions ont été prises pour que les trains transitant n'aient transporté que des hommes, sans armes, sans munitions et sans matériel.

Au surplus, le Gouvernement britannique a d'autant moins de raisons de douter de notre bonne volonté que nous venons d'accepter très volontiers le principe de l'organisation d'un service de liaison entre les services militaires de renseignements français et anglais de Syrie et d'Irak pour qu'ils échangent directement les renseignements qu'ils possèdent. Cette liaison répond à nos intérêts communs et à notre coopération étroite, sans d'ailleurs, ainsi que le rappelait M. Herriot dans les instructions envoyées à nos agents diplomatiques et communiquées au Foreign Office, que la politique large d'accord envisagée entre les deux Gouvernements puisse faire entièrement abstraction de leurs intérêts particuliers ou des engagements qui les lient à certaines nations.

Quoi qu'il en soit, j'ai la plus ferme conviction que, grâce à une collaboration efficace et loyale, recommandée de nouveau à tous nos agents, non seulement les incidents locaux relevés de part et d'autre ne se reproduiront plus, mais que la nature des rapports franco-britanniques en Orient ne fera désormais que resserrer les relations générales des deux pays, dont l'amitié vient de s'affirmer avec tant de force pour le plus grand bénéfice de la paix européenne.

Je vous serai très obligé de bien vouloir donner lecture de la présente dépêche au principal Secrétaire de Sa Majesté britannique pour les Affaires étrangères et de lui en laisser une copie. En même temps, je vous prie de remercier chaleureusement Mr. Chamberlain des paroles si amicalement flatteuses qu'il a bien voulu prononcer à mon endroit dans son discours si élevé, à la Chambre des Communes, sur les accords de Locarno.

A. BRIAND.

[E 7289/357/89]

No. 329.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 26.)*(No. 235. Secret.)  
Sir,*Damascus, November 9, 1925.*

WITH reference to correspondence ending with your telegram No. 20 of the 3rd instant regarding the family of Emir Said Jezairli, I have the honour to report that, in view of French suspiciousness at this moment (see more particularly the eleventh paragraph of my despatch No. 226 of the 31st ultimo), I waited a week before making to the French delegate the communication authorised by your telegram No. 18 of the 30th ultimo. I had hoped that the matter might settle itself without my intervention. During that week I received occasional visits from Emir Said and his relatives, who were of course anxious for me to take action to secure the release of the imprisoned members of the family, namely, the Emirs Tahir and Izz-ud-Din.

2. At last, on the 6th instant, I called on the French delegate and told him that, while not wishing to interfere in French affairs, I felt compelled to inform him that the arrest of persons who had protected the English colony during the recent troubles would cause regret among the British public. I let him know I was making this communication with your knowledge.

3. M. Aubouard was very friendly. He more or less admitted that the arrests were effected at the instance of Soubhi Bey, the President of the State of Syria. He said that he did not take seriously Soubhi Bey's enmity towards Emir Said, but that the whole trouble was really caused by the Emir's ambition to become "Prince de Syrie."

4. M. Aubouard telephoned to M. Béjean, Adviser of Police, and instructed him to come to the delegation in the afternoon to talk the matter over. He gave me to understand that the prisoners would be "mis en liberté provisoire."

5. On the following day the two Emirs were released.

6. Emir Said has asked me to convey to His Majesty's Government his profound gratitude for their effective intervention.

7. I impressed on Emir Said the necessity, in his own interest, of refraining from talking about our intervention. I pointed out that he must live on good terms with the French, in whose zone his interests mainly lay. We were, I said, the allies of the French, and we were deeply interested in a restoration of order in Syria by the French. I hoped, therefore, that he and his relatives would co-operate with the mandatory authorities for that purpose.

8. While not wishing in any way to appear ungrateful for the real assistance rendered by this family to the British colony during the recent troubles, I feel obliged to record that Emir Said was not altogether moved by disinterested motives of humanity.

9. The ambitious, restless character of this prince is no doubt well known to you. During the British occupation of Syria he was expelled by Lord Allenby for activities against Emir Feisal. He was then acting in French interest. The French system of mandatory government gives little power to local magnates, and Emir Said was soon disillusioned as to his chances of playing a considerable part in the government of French Syria. He was further irritated by French action in reducing the amount of the pension paid to the Abd-ul-Kader family in virtue of the treaty with Napoleon III.

10. Last spring the prince invited my wife and myself to a picnic in his country-house on the eastern slopes of the Lebanon. In the intervals of mild social distractions in the form of Oriental music and song, he propounded to me his views about Palestine and Transjordania. He was convinced that Emir Abdullah's incompetence would soon make his further rule in Transjordania impossible. The opportunity would seem favourable for uniting Palestine and Transjordania under a native prince, able to command popular Arab support and at the same time well disposed towards Zionism. His Highness modestly suggested that these qualifications were united in his person. Presumably his favourable dispositions towards Zionism were to be deduced from his alacrity to sell his Palestinian properties to the Jews.

11. I replied that, as far as I knew, there was no prospect of Emir Abdullah's disappearance, and I dismissed the subject as a joke.

12. Latterly, Emir Said, like many Syrians, seems to have inclined to the belief that France's day in Syria is coming to an end. Like many others, he no doubt thinks that we will step into France's shoes. His eagerness, therefore, to please us is not uninfluenced by hopes of favour from the future rulers of Syria.

13. I will, of course, be careful to have as little to do as possible with Emir Said, except in the case of an urgent necessity such as that presented by the recent danger to the British colony.

14. I do not wish the above remarks to imply any ingratitude on my part for the Emir's assistance to me in my hour of need.

I have, &amp;c.

W. A. SMART.

[E 7250/357/89]

No. 330.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 24.)*

(No. 237.)

Sir,

*Damascus, November 10, 1925.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 228 of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to report that the band whose advance towards Damascus caused the panic reported in my telegram No. 29 of the 4th instant was under the command of Zayd, brother of the Druse chieftain, Sultan Pasha Attrash. It was not only, as first believed, French aerial action which prevented its coming to the town. With the approval of the French delegate, some leading men of the Meydan quarter went out to the band and begged it not to enter the town and expose it to the danger of a bombardment. The Meydan quarter had, on the occasion of the incursion of the 18th ultimo, refused to assist the invaders, but had, nevertheless, suffered a bombardment.

2. Zayd replied to the deputation that he had no intention of entering the town and would fight the French in the open. The band then cut the railway just south of Damascus (see the first paragraph of my above-mentioned telegram) and proceeded to Wadi-al-Ajam. The railway was repaired within twenty-four hours.

3. It would seem that the bands have for the present decided not to attack Damascus. Some of the rebels are natives of Damascus, and nearly all of them have little desire to be the cause of the destruction of a great city which they regard with sympathy. The French would thus be justified in arguing that by bombarding the town which they failed or were unable to defend, they have diminished the chances of future attacks. This would amount to an admission that they cannot prevent attacks on a town entrusted to their mandatory protection, except by subjecting it and its non-combatant population to devastations which the rebels themselves are anxious to prevent.

4. The present anomalous situation has, of course, gravely diminished rebel respect for French military power. The insignificant bands which successfully entered the town on the 18th ultimo were able to stay there a couple of days and then withdraw without being directly attacked and without suffering any appreciable losses. Their withdrawal was due to the failure of the population to respond adequately to their incitements and to their reluctance to prolong the sufferings inflicted by the bombardment on a town towards which they cherished no unfriendly sentiments. Needless to say, nearly all the casualties were among the non-combatant population. The idea has thus become prevalent among the ignorant natives that the French can only shelter themselves behind a town which the rebels cannot enter without exposing it, not themselves, to bombardment. Such a dangerous illusion naturally increases the daring of the bands in the countryside.

5. Incidentally, I would observe that there is no justification for the French argument that, but for the bombardment, the whole town would have risen in co-operation with the invaders. There could be no general rising without influential support in the city, and no such support could have been forthcoming in view of the insignificant numbers of the invaders, between 200 and 250 in all. Obviously, no solid internal elements would have been foolish enough to take any risks by co-operating with such an inadequate outside force. Had a couple of thousand Druses followed in the wake of these small bands already inside the city, it is probable that a general rising would have taken place. As it was, only a few bad characters in the various quarters joined in the movement. The only excuse, therefore, for the French action can be either panic or complete ignorance of the realities of the situation, or both factors combined.

6. The French appear to have realised the necessity of providing external protection for the town. M. Aubouard told me that General Gamelin planned to

create a cordon of posts outside the town. The posts at Bab Sharki (Eastern Gate) and the Jewish quarter seem to have been strengthened. The post at Bab Sharki on the night of the 7th-8th instant indulged in furious rifle fire, supported by artillery. The French state that a band, which had on the morning of the 7th instant sacked Douma (5 miles east of the town) for the second time, approached Bab Sharki during the night in question. The natives are inclined to think that it was a case of false alarm.

7. A detachment of the Foreign Legion has erected barricades at Kadem, at the southern edge of the city, incidentally leaving the depot of the Asiatic Petroleum Company 50 yards in front of it. A personal inspection of the ground convinced me that tactical considerations justified the Legion's refusal to advance its line beyond the depot. At least one nocturnal exchange of fire occurred between the Legion and a band. The position of the depot between two fires is hardly satisfactory, and I have advised the native agent to empty it as soon as possible. The manager for Syria, resident at Beirut, Mr. Borland, after his narrow escape recounted in my despatch No. 210 of the 15th ultimo, apparently is not very anxious to revisit Damascus and examine the problem of the company's depot. In order not to prejudice any claim in case of future losses, I have addressed a note to the French delegate requesting that the French lines may be advanced beyond the depot.

8. In the Christian quarter I have been able to discover only intermittent guards at the British and French civilian hospitals. As the soldiers used the British hospital as a look-out post, for which purpose it is conveniently placed at the extreme edge of the town, their presence there might easily become provocative. For the moment, they have again been withdrawn. As indicated in the last paragraph of my despatch No. 228 of the 2nd instant, I believe that for the moment the British colony's safety is best assured by native goodwill. The rebels have made two attempts, the second apparently successful, to burn the bridge over one of the Barada channels, half a mile from the Victoria Hospital, on the main road out of Damascus to Homs.

9. With reference to the second and third paragraphs of my despatch No. 228 of the 2nd instant, bands under the Bakris, Mohammed Kaywan, a Druse from the Lebanon, and other Druse personalities, come and go in the Ghouta and the Merj, up to the very gates of Damascus. The unfortunate villages, after having been plundered by the Foreign Legion, are now being despoiled by the bands. Presumably the French will shortly send out another punitive expedition, before which the bands will again disperse. Doubtless the French force will, in its turn, again plunder the villages and then return to Damascus. This process, in the absence of any change of French military strategy, may go on indefinitely.

10. With reference to the fourth paragraph of my above-mentioned despatch, the French sent out from Homs towards Nebk a force whose advance caused the rebels to evacuate the latter place. The French force then returned to Homs, and the rebels, shortly afterwards, to Nebk in greater numbers. A French Spahi force went out from Homs and attacked Nebk, but was repulsed with appreciable casualties. The French themselves admit ten killed. Ramadan Shalash is apparently in command at Nebk. Under his orders Hassan-al-Kharrat, now styled Minister of Finance of the humorous Provisional Government, is apparently operating southwards of Nebk along the eastern anti-Lebanon.

11. With regard to the Danish missionaries in the Nebk region (see correspondence ending with my despatch No. 230 of the 5th instant) the latest news is that they are getting into trouble for having given asylum and medical care to French wounded. It is reported that the house of one of them, Pastor Prip, at Deir Atiyeh, north-east of Nebk, has been plundered by the rebels.

12. The Beirut railway in the Barada valley appears to be under very real menace of band action, at Dair Kanoun, Zebdani, and Serghaya. The band there is that of Akkasheh, which was operating on the Beirut road, abandoned by him no doubt owing to its having become deserted by traffic. No doubt the bands on the eastern side of the mountain could easily cross over and co-operate with Akkasheh in raids on the railway in the Barada valley. At Bludan, just above Zebdani, are the summer houses and gardens, a church and a school, of the Victoria Hospital and the Irish Presbyterian Mission at Damascus. I have drawn the attention of the French authorities to the situation of these British properties in close proximity to band operations, but of course it is useless to expect any French military assistance. The safety of these properties can only be guaranteed by the goodwill of the natives, peaceful or rebel.

13. With reference to the fifth paragraph of my above-mentioned despatch, the situation in Wadi-al-Ajam has become more serious. Zayd appears to have organised the disorderly Druse elements there with some success. The Circassian irregulars were badly cut up at Kalaat Jandal. They are universally accused, by Druse and Arab alike, of great brutality and predatorialness. They can, therefore, expect no mercy from the rebels. The French column centred at Katana, the capital of Wadi-al-Ajam, appears to be incapable of dealing with the bands, which are, as long expected, now working round Mount Hermon to Hasbaya, but this ultimate and significant development falls within the province of my colleague at Beirut. Nassib Bey Bakri is said to be with the Wadi-al-Ajam bands, either in that district or at Hasbaya.

14. Equally serious is the situation at Kuneitra, encompassed by Druse bands, which are spreading into the Jolan. Their progress in the Jolan will depend largely on Mahmoud-al-Fa'our, head of the Fadl tribe, whose influence in that district is predominating. He has little reason to love the French, from whom he had to fly to Transjordania two years ago. Since his reconciliation with the French and his return to the Jolan, he has remained quiet and has hitherto refused to join the rebels. His defection would, of course, be serious at this moment. The French have twice sent reinforcements to Kuneitra. Druse chiefs and Yahia Bey Hayati, the Damascene ex-Turkish officer who has been playing a considerable part in the direction of Druse military operations, are said to be with the bands round Kuneitra.

15. The Jebel Druse column has been withdrawn from Musaifreh, partly to Damascus and partly to Bosra Eski Sham, which will presumably now be the base for any autumnal operations against the mountain. A light railway is being constructed from Deraa to Bosra Eski Sham. Musaifreh would, anyhow, have had to be abandoned after the rains, for road connection from there to the railway would have become impracticable.

16. Colonel Andréa, commander of the column and Governor of the Jebel Druse from without, sits at Deraa and sends comforting reports of Druse submissions—reports always followed by others, less comforting, of extensions of Druse activities. Obviously, the Druses, feeling for the moment secure in their hitherto inviolate mountain, are trying to carry the war away from their country to other parts of Syria and even into the Lebanon.

17. It is to be hoped that the approach of winter will diminish the mobility of the bands and generally discourage their roaming proclivities.

18. I understand that between 6,000 and 7,000 French reinforcements are expected. These will be inadequate if the rebellion is to be settled by purely military action.

19. The French have been making attempts to recruit Kurdish irregulars from the Kurdish suburb of Damascus. Negotiations were conducted by the delegation through Hussein Ibish, the well-known Kurdish sportsman, with Omar Agha Shabdin, a Kurdish notable. The Kurds said that they were too poor to provide horses. The delegation replied that infantry volunteers would suffice. The Kurds then said that they were not accustomed to fighting on foot. The French are hopeful that they have, by reviving ancient Kurdish grudges against the Druses, won over the Kurds to an effective co-operation. I fear that, like the Ruala at the beginning of the Druse revolt, the Kurds will try to get as much money as possible out of the French and do as little fighting as possible. Anyhow, this system of using native irregulars is open to grave objections. Naturally, they are quite undisciplined, and their depredations excite universal hostility against them. The obvious set made by the bands against the Armenians in the recent trouble at Damascus is attributed to the fact that a number of Armenians were included in the Circassian irregular formations. Circassians, Kurds, Armenians are, after all, small minorities in the predominating Arab and Druse populations. The future of these minorities will not be pleasant among an overwhelming majority of embittered Arabs and Druses.

20. In conclusion, I would draw attention again to the growing gravity of the economic situation. In great parts of Southern Syria it has been impossible, owing to the disorders, to begin the autumnal sowings, which, with variations of date according to climatic differences, must be effected in November and December. If sufficient order is not quickly restored so as to permit considerable sowings, Southern Syria will next year be faced with an economic situation of extreme gravity.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

[E 7254/357/89]

No. 331.

*Acting Consul-General Mayers to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 24.)*  
(No. 149.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inform you that General Sarrail left Beirut quietly for France, without demonstrations of particular note, on the 8th November last. The High Commissioner had expressed a desire that the officers of the garrison should not consider themselves formally bound to take leave of him personally, and no invitation was extended to the consular corps to be present at his departure. Nevertheless, in order to avoid any appearance of lack of courtesy, I went on board, accompanied by the liaison officer, and bade the general farewell.

2. I understand that a movement was started in the Representative Council here for the vote of a message of solidarity with General Sarrail and regret at his departure. With two or three exceptions the members refused to associate themselves with any such motion. Two days later the Governor of the Great Lebanon asked the Conseil des Directeurs, his inner council, to express a similar motion of appreciation and regret. In this case the vote was obtained with two dissentients, who later were congratulated by their colleagues on having had the courage of their convictions.

I have, &amp;c.

NORMAN MAYERS.

[E 7269/357/89]

No. 332.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 25.)*  
(No. 2487.)

Sir,

Paris, November 24, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that it is understood that M. de Jouvenel will sail on the 24th November from Marseilles to take up his post as High Commissioner in Syria. M. de Jouvenel's recent visit to London has not attracted that amount of attention from the newspapers which it might have done had public opinion not been so distracted by the present financial and political crises. The majority of the newspapers have been content merely to chronicle the news of M. de Jouvenel's journey without attempting to draw any wide inferences from this manifestation of Franco-British co-operation in the Near East. The general attitude towards the matter has been one of mild satisfaction, and the only comment of any particular interest which would appear to have been made is that of the "Humanité," the Communist organ, which professes that, as a result of M. de Jouvenel's mission to London, the imperialist and capitalist forces of Great Britain and France will now unite in crushing under foot the aspirations of the native population in the Near East.

2. On being questioned by various journalists on his return to Paris, M. de Jouvenel expressed himself as highly satisfied with the results of his visit to London. He had been able to come to an agreement with the competent British authorities regarding all the questions concerning Franco-British collaboration in the mandated areas, and he had returned assured that he would receive every assistance in his task from the British. M. de Jouvenel declared that he was convinced that the various problems with which France and Great Britain were faced in the Near East could only be solved if they showed the spirit of mutual collaboration such as had been manifested at Locarno.

3. He assured his hearers that Great Britain had no desire to take over the Syrian mandate and that every care must be taken not to give any credit to the rumours which were put about by native propagandists in order to sow trouble between the two nations.

4. Referring particularly to His Majesty's consul at Damascus, M. de Jouvenel stated that he had had the opportunity of studying extracts from certain of Mr. Smart's telegrams and despatches, that the terms of these had exhibited the utmost sympathy towards France, and that it was impossible for him to doubt that Mr. Smart was a sincere believer in the principle of Franco-British collaboration and that he was working towards that end.

5. M. de Jouvenel added that he considered that one of the most urgent of his tasks would be to reach a definite settlement regarding the frontiers between Syria and

the territories under British mandate on the one hand and Turkey on the other. With a view to settling the latter question, he hoped shortly to proceed to Angora to discuss the matter with the Turkish Government.

6. True to its somewhat ostrichlike policy of endeavouring to keep public opinion as uninformed as possible regarding the real facts of the Syrian situation, and with a view, no doubt, to checking the anxiety which had been caused by the news, received through foreign agencies, of the Druse incursion into Southern Lebanon, the Government published the following communiqué on the 21st November:—

"The reports which depict the situation in Syria as being alarming are entirely without foundation. It is absolutely untrue that General Duport has asked for reinforcements to the number of 50,000 men."

"Thanks to the measures taken by the French high command and to the attitude of the native population, which offered to join our forces and out of which several bodies of volunteers have already been formed, the bands who had established themselves in the neighbourhood of Mount Hermon have had to give up any offensive action against Damascus and are being threatened by our columns."

"Information from various sources leads one to expect that these bands will shortly retreat."

7. Disregarding this optimistic communiqué, the "Journal des Débats" of the 23rd November prints a long and interesting leading article on the Syrian situation. This article, of which I have the honour to enclose a copy herein,\* is one of the few which has dealt with the state of affairs in Syria from an objective point of view and which has not endeavoured to treat the Druse revolt or the bombardment of Damascus as a stick with which to beat General Sarrail. The article shows clearly that the unrest in Syria, beginning with the revolt in the Jebel Druse, has spread gradually until now the French are faced with a really formidable Nationalist movement.

8. The much-advertised meeting of protest organised by the "Écho de Paris" and the "Liberté" was held on the 20th November, and was, according to the Opposition press, a great success being attended by several thousand people. At the meeting the following resolution was passed:—

"Les Anciens Combattants et les patriotes prennent acte devant le pays que les maladresses criminelles du Général Sarrail ont provoqué une guerre dont ils ont horreur, et constatent que le Gouvernement n'a voulu jusqu'ici ni faire la lumière, ni prendre des sanctions."

9. This meeting, which was addressed, among others, by M. Henri de Kerillis and M. Taittinger, has attracted very little attention from the press other than that of the *Bloc national*, and, in view of the fact that the proceedings were ended by a procession which made its way past General Sarrail's house shouting, "Assassin! To the gallows with him!" must be regarded more in the light of a personal attack upon the late High Commissioner than as a serious attempt to inculpate the Government for their policy in regard to Syria.

I have, &c.  
CREWE.

[E 7297/357/89]

No. 333

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 26.)*

(No. 240.)

Sir,

Damascus, November 13, 1925.

WITH reference to correspondence ending with my despatch No. 237 of the 10th instant, I venture to offer a few general observations on the situation with which the French are now faced as a result of the state of anarchy in Southern and Central Syria.

2. If the present problem is to be solved by military action only, it is obvious that much larger reinforcements than those hitherto announced will have to be sent to Syria. The rebellion has now become widespread, and the growing misery is

\* Not printed.

adding everywhere to the rebel numbers. The French can count on no effective Arab or Druse support. Everybody's hand is against them, and they can expect little useful assistance from the local gendarmerie and police, which are in their hearts with the rebels. Even the peaceful mercantile populations of the towns long for an ending of French rule, which they associate with hopeless economic stagnation. Indeed, the profounder causes of France's weakness in Syria are to be sought in the general despair of any material prosperity under a French régime. Thus, in the day of trouble, no considerable elements are to be found to come to the rescue of an authority from which no material benefits are hoped for.

3. If, then, the solution is to be military, Syria must be regarded as an enemy country to be reduced by general operations of war on a much larger scale than any hitherto conducted.

4. If France is unwilling or unable to make such a military effort, she must, it would seem, have recourse to political devices.

5. I believe that any attempt to placate the Nationalists by large concessions would be useless. The Nationalists do not want the French at all, and any concessions made to them would only lead to demands for more and of a nature incompatible with any mandatory control.

6. It seems obvious that, if extensive military operations are to be avoided, the only way out of the present difficulties is to come to terms with the Druses.

7. The Druses are quite indifferent to Syrian Nationalism. They merely wish to be left alone in their mountain. This political aloofness of the Druses makes inexcusable the blunders which drove them to rebellion. Of course, now, in their struggle for life, they are welcoming Nationalist and any other help they can get. If they could receive adequate guarantees of a general amnesty and of reasonable local autonomy, they could be detached from the Nationalist rebels and induced to make peace. They have suffered greatly by the war and would welcome a return to normal conditions.

8. Of course, the terms of any peace acceptable to the Druses would involve a sacrifice of French military prestige, but, unless France can quickly undertake more extensive military operations, such a sacrifice would be the lesser of two evils. Failing peace with the Druses or large reinforcements, there seems no early prospect of a termination of the present disorders. Their prolongation, as indicated in the last paragraph of my above-mentioned despatch, will involve Syria in an economic crisis which will drive to desperation and rebellion all sorts of elements hitherto without bellicose inclinations.

9. Once Druse neutrality is assured, the problem of the bands can be solved with the forces now, or shortly to be, at France's disposal in Syria. It is the mountain which serves as the base and refuge of the bands, and it is the mountain which provides the only formidable warlike elements. In order, however, to deal successfully with the band situation, even after a Druse defection, a modification of repressive methods would seem imperative. I have on various occasions drawn attention to the disadvantage of burning and plundering villages, suspected of complicity with the bands or charged with harbouring them. Each ruined village, whether innocent or guilty, merely provides from its desperate population new recruits for the rebels. If a village is suspected, I believe that it would be better policy to hang a few of its chief men, without inflicting material damage on property. Such action would serve as a deterrent without depriving the inhabitants generally of the material means of existence and thus forcing them to become brigands. Moreover, the execution of a few selected victims would not leave behind such lasting resentment against the French. "Man forgets more easily the death of his father than the loss of his patrimony."

10. A corollary of this change of method would be the disbandment of Circassian and other irregulars, whose depredations can hardly be restrained and will react to the ultimate disadvantage of France and of the minorities from which the irregulars are drawn.

11. Obviously any solution on the lines indicated would be facilitated by prompt action. It is urgent, in the interest of mandatory and mandated alike, that the autumnal sowings should be effected, and they must be concluded before January. Unfortunately, the new High Commissioner can hardly arrive before December, and he will require some time to study the situation. Before he has arrived and mastered the factors of the problem, I presume that no comprehensive political scheme can be initiated. Thus the margin of time for the adoption of a sane policy of reconstruction is exceedingly narrow, if it is to anticipate and obviate the

economic disaster which will next year so greatly add to the difficulties of the administrative and military situation.

12. It will be seen, therefore, that the chances of a speedy and successful issue from the present imbroglio are slight. The continuance of the disorders will, as time goes on, cause us more and more anxiety. It is hardly to be hoped that so much lawlessness can be indefinitely confined north of our mandatory borders. Reactions are bound to occur which will expose the adjoining regions of Palestine and Transjordania to the danger of disorder and brigandage.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

[E 7291/357/89]

No. 334.

*Acting Consul-General Mayers to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 26.)*

(No. 150.)

Sir,

*Beirut, November 15, 192.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, as foreshadowed in paragraph 13 of Damascus despatch No. 237 of the 10th instant, a Druse band, said to be commanded by Hamzi-el-Darwish under the orders of Zayd Attrash, and about 1,000 strong, entered Hasbeya on the 10th November. The rebels are described as being badly in need of food and clothing.

2. Next day part of the band, reinforced by recruits from Hasbeya, advanced to the Maronite village of Kaukaba, where a demand for fifty rifles and £200 was presented. On refusal, firing broke out and a small pitched battle seems to have resulted. It ended with considerable slaughter on both sides, a Maronite priest being killed in the *mélée*. The men of Kaukaba retired and their village was sacked and burned.

3. These happenings sent a shiver of apprehension through the Southern Lebanon, and refugees flocked into Nebatiye and Sidon. Two French gunboats went down to the latter port and the Governor motored to Nebatiye to watch such preparations for defence as could be made. The district is practically empty of troops, but at the alarm such forces as were available were sent to Jezzin, Beiteddin, Tyre and Nebatiye. I understand that the handful of Senegalese and native gendarmes who were in Hasbeya when the band descended on it retired to the bridge over the Litani and to Nebatiye, but that subsequently a force went out to defend Judeide when it was ascertained that the rebels had not penetrated so far.

4. These events have brought the revolt much nearer home to observers in Beirut. The Shouf district round Deir-el-Kamer and Beiteddin, ancient home of the Druses, has so far remained quiet, its Druse inhabitants living in amity with their Christian neighbours. Will an attempt be made to raise them?

5. Vague and even more alarming rumours are whispered abroad. It is said that Dr. Shahbander has arrived in Mecca, where he will try to convert to larger issues King Ali and the Sultan of Nejd, presumably weary of their long quarrel. It is most likely that the persons who give credence to this rumour under-estimate the physical and religious obstacles to any jihad from the south to the rescue of those who might be represented as Syrian patriots; but the rumour is symptomatic. Another with more verisimilitude suggests that the Metwalis, already once in revolt since the occupation, might join the insurrection if they came into contact with the rebel bands.

6. There is another aspect of the new development. Two days ago a party of five muleteers were atrociously murdered on the Beirut-Damascus road in the Lebanon. They were Christians, and they were killed not with any motive of robbery, but because of their faith. The incident took place at Deir-el-Baidar, and the murderers are thought to have come from a Druse village near Ain Zehalte. The bandits are thus infiltrating into the Lebanon, for the crime was only committed after exploits in the Damascus area.

7. Violence and death are common themes nowadays, but this particular murder, within an hour's drive from Beirut, has made an unpleasant impression. It follows on the news of the large Druse band at Hasbeya—that is, on the skirts of the Lebanon. Further, the French authorities are handing out rifles to the young men of the Christian villages and drafting them back to danger points in the mountains. The Christian press in Beirut extols the defenders of Kaukaba, and calls the Christian

Lebanon to arms in the name of the forty youths who perished there. For the moment little further news is arriving and neither side has made an important move; but should the insurrection spread, there will be a new possible danger to be reckoned with—that of internecine strife and the conversion of an anti-French struggle into civil war.

8. The Italian consul-general informs me that his Government has despatched ships to Rhodes to watch events here.

I have, &c.  
NORMAN MAYERS

No. 335.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received November 26.)  
(No. 71.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, November 26, 1925.

FOLLOWING from liaison officer [? for information of] Air Ministry:—

"Martial law proclaimed southern State of Syria. Rasheya relieved just in time. Garrison had 50 per cent. casualties and lost 200 out of 300 horses killed. Approximately 300 rebels killed. Rebels retiring south and east. Situation south of Homs disquieting. Railway cut."

[? Repeated to] Palestine.)

No. 336.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received November 26.)  
(No. 35.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Damascus, November 26, 1925.

STATE of siege proclaimed yesterday (Wednesday) in town of Damascus and Sanjak of Damascus and Hauran.

No. 337.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Consul Smart (Damascus).*  
(No. 29.)  
(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, November 30, 1925.

YOUR despatch No. 245 of 17th November: Proposed visit to Amman and Jerusalem.

I gladly authorise proposed visit. You should, however, not start until new French High Commissioner has reached Damascus, as he is desirous of making your acquaintance on first possible occasion.

Your despatch No. 236 of 9th November.

I approve your language. I shall impress the importance of the points raised by you on the Colonial Office.

You interpret exactly the policy and wishes of His Majesty's Government.

[E 7412/357/89]

No. 338.

*Acting Consul-General Mayers to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received December 1.)  
(No. 152.)

Sir,

Beirut, November 17, 1925.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 150 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to report that the arrival to-day of two battalions of foot by troopship at Beirut has encouraged a slightly more hopeful outlook in the Southern Lebanon.

2. Yesterday was a day of alarm and despondency. One of the two local newspapers in French went so far as to state that the forces at the disposal of the

mandatory Power here were not sufficient to exercise even a moral, much less a physical, effect on the rebels in their full career of robbery, assassination and incendiaryism. The call to arms continued, and lurid tales of rape and atrocity were hinted at. Many deputations waited impatiently on the Governor of the Great Lebanon, calling for a defence of the mountain villages. Abu Kamha, a village to the south of Hasbeya, was reported as having suffered the same fate as Kaukaba. Vague rumours were spread of the advance of Zayd Attrash on Jezzin and Nebatiye. I hourly expected the call of my Italian colleague with the news that he had telegraphed a request for destroyers.

3. From a visit to the High Commission I gained the impression that reinforcements were not arriving as adequately as had been asked for, and that it would be still ten days at least before any could be put into the field. Meanwhile, in the menaced area of the Southern Lebanon, if the worst came to the worst, the French were going to hold Sidon and a central position in the hills, presumably Jezzin.

4. To-day the fall of Judeide (or Merjayoun) to the rebels is announced. It was guarded by gendarmes and armed volunteers, whose retreat towards Nebatiye was protected by a detachment of Senegalese with machine guns. Officially there were few casualties, but these may be more than admitted. However, the despatch to Jezzin of a battalion of infantry set free by the arrival of the troops mentioned in paragraph 1 above has counteracted the depression in public spirits. Motor vehicles in Beirut have been commandeered for the despatch of these men south. The defences along the Litani hold, and the rebels are not, as reported, in Nebatiye, an excellent centre from which to raise the Metwalis.

5. To my knowledge the only British-born person in the affected area is Miss Lilian Cave, of the British Syrian Mission, who has a school in Hasbeya. The occupation of the town was too sudden to allow of any attempt on my part to bring her to Beirut. From what I hear of the friendly attitude of the rebels I do not think that Miss Cave has anything to fear for the moment from the Druses in occupation. Further, I have notified the French of her exact whereabouts and supplied a photograph of her school for identification purposes. This, the British liaison officer informs me, was to be sent to Damascus to-day. If the French should decide to bomb the town from the air they will, therefore, have every means of identifying Miss Cave's house, which is a conspicuous one on the eastern fringe of the town.

6. Two American destroyers have been lying off Beirut for several days, and, as mentioned in paragraph 8 of my despatch under reference, Italian ships have probably been sent to Rhodes to await events. The presence of British ships here would fulfil certain useful purposes. They would in the hour of need or of panic encourage rebels, or the more unworthy breed of thieves and looters, to a healthy respect of British property and lives. They might by their presence tend to keep open the Beirut-Haifa road, which is nowhere out of sight or range from the sea; and it would appear fitting, should the worst happen, that British ships should be present with American and Italian vessels to take whatever steps in co-operation should become necessary. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the French were hardly pleased to see American destroyers in the harbour, and I have felt that, in view of the inability in some quarters to perceive that Great Britain is neither a hidden instigator nor a *tertius gaudens* in this matter, British ships should not make their appearance here except in the last extremity. If on any future occasion I make, with all respect and in the knowledge that my inexperience will be taken into account, a request that the step of sending ships to Beirut be considered, I trust that the foregoing statement will show that I have neither overlooked the question nor envisaged its consequences without due seriousness.

I have, &c.  
NORMAN MAYERS.

[E 7409/357/89]

No. 339.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*—(Received December 1.)

(No. 249.)  
Sir,

Damascus, November 18, 1925.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 31 of the 12th instant, I have the honour to report that M. Albert Londres, the correspondent of the "Petit Parisien," to whom General Sarrail made the declarations in question at Alexandria, called on me yesterday

and said that, as he was quite impartial, he would like to have my point of view on the subject.

2. I replied that, as the matter was under reference to my Government, I was precluded from making any statement. I suggested that he should apply to the French delegate for information.

3. M. Londres said that General Sarrail had told him that I had posted up notices in the town. I replied that this statement was inexact. I showed him the obscure corner in the consulate waiting-room where the notices had been affixed, and asked him whether he thought that two bits of paper pinned up there could, anyhow, have added much to a panic created by two days' bombardment. He laughed.

4. M. Londres evidently did not take General Sarrail's statements as gospel truth and generally expressed himself in very friendly terms. He insisted much on the importance of Anglo-French collaboration. I replied that nobody with any sense of responsibility and with some knowledge of the situation in the Arabian Near East could fail to realise how essential to both our countries was such a collaboration.

5. He left for Beirut to-day, promising to lunch with me on his return. No doubt he will have to represent affairs as favourably as possible from the French point of view, but I have hopes that he has sufficient sense of responsibility to avoid making wanton mischief between his countrymen and ourselves.

6. With reference to my despatch No. 240 of the 13th instant, he made some interesting remarks about the prospect of peace with the Druses. He said that the French were afraid to make peace with the Druses before the latter had been militarily reduced. Such a peace, it was thought, would render the Druses insupportably arrogant and lead them to cause all sorts of trouble to the French in the future. If M. Londres' remarks reflect the fixed view of the supreme French authorities, there can be little hope of an early termination of the present disorders, and the suppression of the rebellion can only be effected by military reinforcements larger than any now in view.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 7446/357/89]

No. 340.

*Acting Consul-General Mayers to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 3.)*

(No. 156.)

Sir,

*Beirut, November 22, 1925.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 152 of the 17th instant, I have the honour to inform you that, swayed between alternate waves of optimism and pessimism, public opinion in Beirut is again inclined to apprehension regarding the situation in the Hasbeya district. There is at present no concern for the safety of the capital, but the general state of the Lebanon gives genuine grounds for inquietude. Fighting is at present confined to the hill country between the Litani and Mount Hermon. The rebels are attacking at the two bridges of Burkhas and Khurdela. However, although they are credited with designs on Nabatiye and Jezzin, the tendency of the conflagration for the moment is to spread northward. Rachyea is in the midst of hostile country and is almost besieged. Some Druses in the vicinity are joining the rebels, and shots are being fired from hitherto friendly villages at French aeroplanes. Refugees are leaving the Rachyea district for Zahle. A French official described the situation to me as still serious.

2. The intentions of Hamzi-el-Darwish and Zayd Attrash are not yet clear. It cannot be determined whether their objective is: (1) In a westerly direction, the Metwalis, or the Druses of the Shouf; or (2) in a northerly direction, the foothills of the Anti-Lebanon, and thence to the Beirut-Damascus road; or (3) a diversion covering an attack by other forces on Rayak or Damascus; or (4) to maintain themselves where they now are in the territory added after much controversy to the new State of the Great Lebanon by the mandatory Power. In the meanwhile, they are attempting by what meagre publicity resources they possess to counteract the effect of the accusation of anti-Christian motives with which their enemies credit them.

3. Obviously the French will try to encircle them. But in view of the extreme mobility of the bands, their guerilla tactics and the complicity of some parts of the population, this will be a very difficult task.

4. An important political problem has made itself evident during the past week—the question of volunteers. At the time of the occupation of Hasbeya and the sack of Kaukaba by the bands the French authorities, without effective arms to defend the Lebanon, and desperately in need of the improvisation of some form of resistance, resorted to the distribution of rifles mentioned in paragraph 7 of my despatch No. 150 of the 15th instant.

5. The need was desperate, but the remedy is likely to have complications. At best it was a confession of weakness. It laid the mandatory Power open to the dangerous suggestion that, without realising perhaps the consequences, they had encouraged not only civil but also religious war. In those first few days when the widest publicity was given to an appeal to the men of the Lebanon to defend their country, it never occurred to anyone that the volunteers would be anything but Christians. It was in the first place unlikely that arms would be handed out to Metwalis and Druses who might desert on their first encounter with the insurgents. In the second place the soul of the resistance was to be the barring of the Lebanon to what are described, in a newspaper which implores its readers to put the religious issue aside, as those pillaging barbarians the men of the Hauran and Damascus, with the Bedouin.

6. Further, the French have been at some pains to correct the impression that the question of religion entered into the defence of the Lebanon. They have made the most of whatever offers of service they have had from the Metwalis and the Sunni Moslems, and will doubtless try to arrange the volunteers, if the experiment, with all its military and political dangers, is continued, on a professedly non-confessional basis. But whatever attempts will now be made to allay suspicion, it is evident that the question of the volunteer army has added one more to the many causes of uneasiness here. The Druses in the districts still untouched by the rebellion are alarmed for their own safety when every prospect points to their being left unarmed in the midst of armed and excited neighbours. The tide of passion and fear may run dangerously high. The Acting High Commissioner, speaking recently to Druse and Christian delegations, asked them not to believe that, if the Government had at first only distributed means of defence to Christians, French solicitude was confined to the latter. It happened, he said, that the villages most menaced at the outset were Christian. The Druse deputations went away, I believe, in some measure calmed by his assurances. On the other hand, a chance murder might set the two factions, in their present nervous state, at one another's throats. The Lebanon might be near one of those slaughters which brought it often before the eyes of the world in the course of the nineteenth century.

7. A difficult administrative task, when the military operations are over, lies before the French. The drift of disturbance towards the Lebanon has brought out vividly the utter cleavage which exists between these mountains, with their long tradition of the Christian and the French connection, and the rest of the territory under French mandate. As long as the trouble only affected the Jebel Druse and Damascus, the noise of battle seemed far away. The menace to his own hearth has brought out all that is separatist in the Lebanese. Let the plague rage in Syria, he thinks, it is outrageous that these "savages" should bring their woes into the Lebanon and inoculate him with their fever. He was shocked at the bombardment of Damascus, but the concern is not now his. To him the Moslem Damascus Nationalists, the Druses and the Bedouin are what the Picts and the Scots, in their savagery and hostility to the Roman legions, were to the peace-loving inhabitants of Romanised Britain.

8. French prestige has lost further ground since the exploits of Zayd have become known. Even those last-ditchers of the French connection, the Christian bishops and patriarchs, are reported to be restive. General Duport and General Gamelin recently visited the aged Maronite Patriarch, a courtesy which it will be remembered General Sarrail put off for six months. The official attitude towards the Church has radically altered since the late High Commissioner embarked. Nevertheless, even Christians are now beginning to question the efficacy of the mandate, not only in the present, but also for the future. The France of the Third Republic is not the France they had been led by long educational endeavour to expect. Something after the manner of the Catholic France of the time of Bossuet would have suited best. The echoes of modern French politics jar on the ears of archimandrites. M. de Jouvenel has already on the one hand been reported as declaring himself a freethinker, and on the other said he would deal leniently with such personages as Dr. Shahbander. These apparently innocuous declarations have

been received indifferently here. With the best of administrations it will be a long time before the comparative harmony of a few months ago is restored. France, historically and perhaps permanently linked with the Christian sects in Syria, will find the path towards impartiality a thorny one.

I have, &c.  
NORMAN MAYERS.

No. 341.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 3.)*

(No. 73.)

(Telegraphic.)

FOLLOWING for Air Ministry from liaison officer:—

"Situation remains disturbed east of Damascus.

"Three French columns converging on Hasbeya from the north, south-west and south-east in endeavour to surround rebels, who will probably escape by night.

"Situation at Hauran obscure. Railway again cut north of Deraa."

(Repeated to Palestine.)

No. 342.

*Consul Smart to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 3.)*

(No. 36.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Damascus, December 3, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 29.

During the last few days bands have penetrated into at least four quarters of the town, including Jewish and consulate quarters, and further incursions are threatened.

On the 30th November French authorities informed me officially that they might have to bombard certain quarters of the town.

French protection can be regarded as only theoretical except in northern suburbs and along railway line, but I anticipate little danger to British subjects except from vagaries of French military action. Persistent French failure to give me timely warnings of possible danger to our people obliges me to watch situation myself with greatest vigilance. I therefore do not feel justified in leaving British colony here at present unless you think visit to Jerusalem immediately desirable.

See my despatches No. 257 of 30th November and No. 259 of 2nd December on the way.

[E 7471/357/89]

No. 343.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 4.)*

(No. 254.)

Sir,  
Damascus, November 23, 1925.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 237 of the 10th instant, I have the honour to report that band activity in Southern Syria has shown no sign of diminishing during the last fortnight.

2. Fighting between the bands and the French has been fairly continuous in the Ghour and the Merj. Any detailed description of this guerrilla would be fastidious. Curious encounters have taken place at Jisr-al-Ghayda and at Zebdeen, a few miles east of Damascus. At the first place Hassan-al-Kharrat was slightly wounded, and a score of his men killed. At the latter place the rebels claim to have inflicted appreciable losses on the French. One French aeroplane, the motor of which was hit by a bullet, had to make a forced descent on unfavourable ground just outside the city. The aeroplane was badly damaged, but its occupants escaped with

slight injuries. A number of bridges have been destroyed by the rebels with a view to hampering French military movements. Needless to say, all these French expeditions have been inconclusive. The bands scatter at the approach of any considerable force, which then returns to town, often harried on its way back.

3. The bands have repeatedly approached the eastern gate of the town at night and exchanged fire with the French troops there. On the morning of the 20th instant the corpses of two Circassian and one Kurdish irregulars were found hanging on trees in front of the French positions at the eastern gate, with inscriptions pinned to their breasts to the effect that they had been executed by order of the "Independence Tribunal." The French have succeeded in raising about a couple of hundred Kurdish irregulars (see paragraph 19 of my above-mentioned despatch), and the Kurds are now sharing with the Circassians the dangerous odium of the Arabs and Druses.

4. I would mention that the gravest apprehensions are being excited by this French policy of using native irregulars. This apprehension has been much increased by news from the Lebanon to the effect that the French are arming the Christian villagers there. Racial and religious hatreds, vendettas and endless mutual recriminations are feared as the result of this reckless policy.

5. Band raids have also been effected on the Meydan, or southern end of the town. The activities of the bands round Damascus are doubtless partly due to the desire to keep here as many French troops as possible, while more important rebel movements are in progress in the Southern Lebanon and elsewhere. It is remarkable how bands, numbering only two or three hundred, can immobilise a large French force at Damascus.

6. Northwards and along the eastern Anti-Lebanon band-rule is still largely prevalent, though there seems to have been latterly a tendency of the bands to move southwards. The Christian villages of Seydnaya and Maloola continue to be practically besieged. Seydnaya, in view of its abandonment by the French, has formed a sort of ecclesiastical Government of Defence. It is the site of an important convent and is an Orthodox Greek centre.

7. In Wadi-al-Ajam the position has been so serious that the despatch of all Government records from Katana to Damascus has been contemplated. However, a French force has just proceeded through Wadi-al-Ajam to Kalaat Jandal, presumably with the intention of taking in the rear the Druse invaders in the Lebanon. This force is said to have had a successful encounter with the Druses at Kalaat Jandal.

8. Round Kuneitra the bands remain more or less in possession of the country-side.

9. One curious feature of the situation is the ease with which Druse reinforcements can cross the railway and proceed to Wadi-al-Ajam, Wadi Attaim and Hasbaya.

10. The bands have not succeeded in making any effective movement against the Damascus-Rayak Railway, nor have they yet made the movement, long feared, from the Anti-Lebanon into the Baalbec plain, where they have been counting on Metaouli assistance.

11. In the Hauran some Druse raids on villages are reported.

12. It is disquieting to find the natives already depreciating the quality of the recent French reinforcements. A notable, not a Nationalist, gravely declared, in conversation with an Englishman here, that they cannot shoot straight and that some of the soldiers hardly know how to load their rifles. Of course, much of this belief is due to the general native depreciation of everything French and to the more recent loss of French military prestige. I understand, however, that the new troops are really very raw and inadequately trained.

13. It may be said that the French now in Southern Syria do little more than hold the railways and the urban centres. All roads and the countryside have been abandoned to rebel discretion.

14. Events in the Southern Lebanon, where the French seem to have a golden chance, by advances from the Syrian side along Wadi-al-Ajam and Wadi Attaim, of dealing a heavy blow at the Druses, are being eagerly watched by all malcontents here. If the French fail to profit by the present opportunity and to inflict a severe defeat on these daring invaders, it is to be feared that Syria will furnish other bands for raids into the Lebanon.

15. The approaching rains and winter, whilst making French military movements more difficult, should, at the same time, check the activity of the bands, which

will find it less pleasant to roam the country in wet and cold. There is also no doubt that the villagers, at first wholly in favour of the bands, are now wearied of their exactions. The band leaders have resorted to what amounts to selected conscription. They also now exact from each village regular contributions for the maintenance of each recruit taken from it. They have, it is said, even contemplated giving the bands uniforms and military formations.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

No. 344.

*Sir Austen Chamberlain to Consul Smart (Damascus).*

(No. 33.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Foreign Office, December 4, 1925.*

YOUR telegram No. 36 of 3rd December: Need of remaining at present in consulate.

While your visit to Jerusalem would, in more normal circumstances, be desirable, I agree that present situation at Damascus renders it necessary to postpone visit.

[E 7619/357/89]

No. 345.

*Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 10.)*

(No. 256.)

Sir,

*Damascus, November 28, 1925.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 254 of the 23rd instant, I have the honour to report that a band from the western regions of Southern Syria, under the command of Ahmed Sausak, brother of Jumaa Sausak (see paragraph 4 of my despatch No. 228 of the 2nd instant), made a descent on the railway on the 25th instant at Kusseir, about 25 miles south of Homs. They killed three unfortunate French employees of the "cadastre" who happened to be working there, and then destroyed the line over a short distance. Homs had been practically denuded of troops and it was feared that the band might advance against the town. The French authorities even detained at Tripoli thirty lorries being despatched by the Nairn Transport Company to the Persian Government via Tripoli, Homs and Palmyra. This would seem to show that considerable apprehensions must have been entertained for the town of Homs itself. Apparently, however, the band retired in an easterly direction. The French delegate tells me that two battalions, which recently arrived at Beirut from France, have been despatched to Homs via Tripoli. M. Aubouard expected them to arrive to-day or to-morrow at Homs, where their arrival would, he thought, make the town quite safe. Anyhow, he said that the above-mentioned lorries could proceed to Homs, where they are to put themselves in the hands of the local "officier de renseignements" as regards their further progress to Palmyra.

2. The damage to the line has been repaired and railway communication re-established. This move against the railway was doubtless intended to relieve French pressure on the Druse invaders of the Southern Lebanon.

3. A number of troops have been taken from the Damascus garrison and sent to Wadi-al-Ajam and Kuneitra, presumably as part of the encircling movement against the Druse invaders of the Southern Lebanon. M. Aubouard, in conversation with me to-day, said that it was not known exactly where the Druses had gone to after their recent repulse from Rasheya. They are probably slipping into Wadi-al-Ajam, round Mount Hermon. It rather looks as if the encircling movement is not going to net many of these mobile invaders. Doubtless Zeid's band at Hasbeya is finding little difficulty also in slipping round Mount Hermon into Wadi-al-Ajam and through the fingers of the French. However, the French troops seem to be harassing the Druse inhabitants of the villages on the eastern slopes of Mount Hermon and generally harrying the rebels in Wadi-al-Ajam and round Kuneitra, in both of which regions severe fighting is now going on.

4. The Ghouta and Merj continue to be the scene of band operations, and the French appear to have no comprehensive plan of dealing with these disorders at the very gates of Damascus. The French delegate gravely notified me in writing that a French post had been established in Douma, 5 miles east of Damascus, and that this measure had restored order in the eastern garden area, which, needless to say, remains almost entirely at rebel discretion. On the very day of this notification the rebels raided the village of Kharasta, between Douma and Damascus.

5. On the 25th instant, in the late afternoon and again at night, movements were made by bands against the French post just outside the eastern gate of the town. Heavy rifle and some artillery fire seem to have resulted in no casualties. The use of artillery at night against scattered bands advancing through gardens would seem to be of little value. As artillery is quickly used on such occasions, presumably a moral effect is hoped for. Anyhow, it does not seem to deter the bands, which do not hesitate to come right up to the city and even attack octroi posts.

6. The light railway from Deraa to Bosra Eski Sham (see paragraph 15 of my despatch No. 237 of the 10th instant) is now completed.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 7620/357/89]

No. 346.

*Acting Consul-General Mayers to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 10.)*

(No. 162.)

Sir,

*Beirut, November 29, 1925.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 156 of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to inform you that the main band of Zayd Attrash moved northward from Hasbeya and completed the investment of the French garrison of Rasheya. It was not generally recognised how serious the position of the garrison was until news of their relief in the citadel by a column moving in a forced march from Rayak and Zahle was announced. This column arrived in the vicinity of Rasheya on the night of the 23rd, and, fighting its way through the town, relieved the garrison, now desperately in need of succour, in the afternoon of the 24th.

2. The British liaison officer, who visited Rasheya shortly afterwards, tells me that he saw everywhere signs of a furious struggle. The Druses, who during their few days of possession had been aided by the connivance or the neutrality of some of the inhabitants of the town, had put scaling ladders up to the walls of the old fort and made their entry through holes in the fortifications. The combat had become practically a hand-to-hand affair, the French holding one side of the courtyard and the rebels the other. Both sides had used cold steel. The place was a shambles of dead men and horses.

3. The rebels had made a grim attempt to capture the fortress, and left 300 dead behind them as a token of their fighting qualities. It has been suggested that they counted on capturing Rasheya and on making it a centre of operations towards the Lebanon. In attacking the region of Damascus they had extended the scope of the insurrection and gained new supporters. Similarly, they hoped to generalise unrest and confusion in the Lebanon, where they have many potential sympathisers. Hasbeya fell into their hands without resistance, but thereafter the raid lost momentum. Although they found some friends, they met with opposition from other sections of the population, and the situation was finally saved by the arrival in Syria of French reinforcements. Zayd Attrash then decided on a swift seizure of Rasheya, and, aided by the new men sent him by his brother, made the attempt, which came within an ace of accomplishment.

4. The explanation is not altogether sound. It is unlikely that Zayd thought he could maintain himself definitely in any one position, such as Rasheya, particularly as the French, with all the advantage of guns and cavalry, would have little difficulty in driving him from it if given the time. The raid was obviously intended to secure booty and to increase discontent with the French, and could have hardly aimed at consolidation in the proper sense. It appears much more probable that the insurgents, even if they had succeeded in killing every Frenchman in Rasheya, would, in any case, have moved rapidly away from the town after the action. Zayd Attrash cannot linger in any spot which is accessible to the striking force which the French now possess in his present sphere of operations.

5. The Druses are said to have dispersed eastward towards Katana and south again to Hasbeya, where they will be more sheltered. From what private information is available, some of them appear to be still in the hills east of Rasheya. The road from Zahle to the town is unsafe, and the mountains echo with occasional shots. The smoke of burning villages can be seen for miles.

6. The French have not modified their policy of burning out suspected friends of the rebels in the villages they occupy, and looting goes on unchecked. I cannot but add what has been pointed out by His Majesty's consul in Damascus, that this harsh treatment, which in the flush of success cannot but be applied indiscriminately, is bound to prolong hatred and multiply desolation. Neither the foreign legionaries nor the Senegalese are likely to care much whom they pillage. I am at present investigating the case of a British naturalised subject of Canada, a Christian living in Rasheya, who found Senegalese, he says, looting his house. They threatened to shoot him if he disturbed them.

7. The French are in Judeide again, and the centre of disturbance seems to have moved south once more to Hasbeya, where an engagement between the French troops and the insurgents is either already joined or soon imminent. Yesterday I received a telephone message from the French High Commission saying that an English lady, whose name was unknown, wanted a motor-car sent down at once to Judeide. I despatched a car and put a cavass in charge of it. About 8 in the evening he returned with his fare, who turned out to be the Miss Cave mentioned in paragraph 5 of my despatch No. 152.

8. After being in Hasbeya almost three weeks with the Druses in occupation, Miss Cave, of whom we had in the meanwhile received reassuring news, made her way on foot on the 27th to Judeide, her express intention being, she confidentially informs me, to warn the French of an ambush prepared for them on the road.

9. I will not repeat the details of Miss Cave's story, which have been given to the correspondent of the "Times." She had been treated with every mark of respect by the insurgents, who gave out in Hasbeya that they represented not a band of thieves, but a revolutionary Government, with a flag of its own. She confirms that the Druses and rebels from the Hauran who first seized the town were later joined by local allies. They all expressed hatred of the French, and wanted Miss Cave to get into communication with the British post at Metullah and ask a British officer to come over the border and take charge, they being quite willing to hand over. They were only children, they said, and they knew they wanted looking after, but they would not have the French to do it. Miss Cave told them that the British Government was not in Metullah, but in London. She added that, if they liked, she would write to me and ask me to try to make their peace with the French. They would have none of it.

10. When she left Hasbeya the Druses were beginning to lose confidence. They had been little impressed by the aeroplanes which had bombed the town eight times during the occupation and only killed three persons, of whom one was an old woman. They merely took shelter in the olive-groves until their visitors had left. But they were uneasy at the general situation. However, if the French caught them they would be hanged, so they were going to fight on.

11. Public opinion is beginning to wonder if M. de Jouvenel will bring any hope of conciliation with him. The Moslems of Beirut have taken note of the fact the new High Commissioner is not a French general, as the three former ones have been. They are not friends of the Druses, but recent events have reawakened their old sense of grievance. An indication of the trend of their intentions is to be found in a manifesto published a few days ago in the name of the Moslem notables of Beirut. This recounts with pride the abstention of the Moslems from adding to their country's troubles, in spite of injury to their faith, their liberty and their commerce. They hope that the authorities, not mistaking their patriotic patience for impotence, will quickly introduce reforms which will ensure them greater freedom of government and administration and more voice in the directing of the policy of their country.

12. M. de Jouvenel arrives in Beirut in a couple of days. He will probably find throngs of petitioners, encouraged by his declarations in France, to meet him, and this explains the doubtful success of his profession of liberalism in Christian circles here.

I have, &c.  
NORMAN MAYERS.

[E 7751/357/89]

No. 347.

Consul Smart to Mr. Austen Chamberlain. —(Received December 15.)

(No. 257.)  
Sir,

Damascus, November 30, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter addressed to me yesterday morning by the French delegation regarding the possibility of a bombardment outside the town, and a letter addressed to me in the afternoon of the same day stating that certain quarters of the town itself might be bombarded.

2. I also enclose copy of a letter from the consular corps in reply to the second of the above communications and a copy of the answer of the delegation to this collective note.

3. I also enclose copy of a letter from General Soulé regarding the preliminary warnings of bombardment and a copy of a communication from the delegation regarding the prohibition of circulation after 6 P.M. instead of 8 P.M., as has hitherto been the case.

4. The bands in the neighbourhood of Damascus have become more daring and numerous of late. They have received recruits from villages bombed by the French and from the town itself. Both yesterday and to-day fighting has been in progress at the edges of the eastern quarters. Bands came into the town itself, into the Meydan (southern), the Shaghour (eastern), and the Jewish quarters. The bazaars closed hurriedly to-day in anticipation of danger.

5. It would appear that the French are unable to organise an exterior defence of the town, as urged in the third paragraph on p. 3 of the note of the consular corps enclosed in my despatch No. 216 of the 23rd ultimo. It appears also that they are not prepared to suffer the casualties which might be involved by the more normal use of infantry, machine-guns, hand grenades, &c., to clear quarters in which bands may have obtained a footing. Perhaps this reluctance to incur casualties is inspired by fear of public opinion in France. In view of these two inabilities it would seem that the only way to defend the town is by the unconventional method of bombarding it. Once this method is admitted as inevitable, I am of opinion that the indications regarding bombardment and disorders given by General Soulé in Enclosures 4 and 5 of this despatch are as satisfactory as can be expected. I have accordingly conveyed to him my personal thanks for his frankness. I doubt, however, whether my colleagues, who are inclined to take things more seriously and are less charitable to the unfortunate French authorities in the present difficult circumstances, will be as philosophical.

6. Of course the penultimate paragraph of General Soulé's letter (Enclosure 5 in this despatch) is rather humorous in view of the excitements to which he and the bands propose to subject the Europeans who remain at Damascus.

7. I have warned British subjects to collect at the consulate or the British Hospital in case of trouble.

8. I propose later to discuss the measures, partly non-existent, which General Soulé in his letter (Enclosure 5 in this despatch) declares to have been taken for the protection of certain quarters.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

Enclosure 1 in No. 347.

M. Delelée-Desloges to Consul Smart.

M. le Consul,

Damas, le 30 novembre 1925.  
J'AI l'honneur de porter à votre connaissance que des bandes ont été signalées dans la région de Damas. Dans le cas où elles constituerait un objectif favorable, elles seraient prises sous le feu de l'artillerie.

Je tiens à vous prévenir que, si une pareille éventualité se réalisait, la ville proprement dite ne courrait, de ce fait, aucun danger.

Veuillez, &amp;c.

(Pour le Délégué du Haut-Commissaire  
auprès des Etats de Syrie et du  
Djebel Druse, absent),  
Le Délégué adjoint,  
DELELÉE-DESLOGES.

Enclosure 2 in No. 347.

M. Paccard to Consul Smart.

M. le Consul,

J'AI l'honneur de porter à votre connaissance que je viens d'être informé par M. le Général Soulé, commandant les troupes de la région de Damas, qu'il peut être amené, dès maintenant, à faire tirer le canon sur certains quartiers de la ville où des bandes seraient signalées.

Veuillez, &amp;c.

(Pour le Délégué du Haut-Commissaire),  
(P.O.) Le Secrétaire chargé du Cabinet,  
H. PACCARD.

Enclosure 3 in No. 347.

Consular Corps to French Delegate, Damascus.

M. le Délégué,

JE suis chargé par le corps consulaire de vous communiquer la réponse suivante à la notification que nous venons de recevoir à 5 heures de l'après-midi aujourd'hui. Selon cette notification, que vous avez bien voulu adresser à chaque consul par lettre séparée, M. le Général Soulé vient de vous aviser qu'il peut être, dès maintenant, amené à faire tirer le canon sur certains quartiers de la ville.

Le corps consulaire espère que les autorités mandataires voudront bien, soit notifier exactement quels quartiers seront exposés aux bombardements, soit déclarer qu'aucun quartier de la ville ne pourra être assuré contre un bombardement. En outre, il prie les autorités mandataires de bien vouloir indiquer quels quartiers seront assurés contre les dangers d'émeutes comme distincts de ceux de bombardement.

Si la sécurité d'aucun quartier de la ville ne peut être assurée, le corps consulaire prie les autorités françaises de bien vouloir faire savoir si elles sont d'avis que les étrangers doivent évacuer la ville. Si, au contraire, la sécurité de certains quartiers pouvait être assurée, le corps consulaire se concerterait avec les autorités françaises pour que les ressortissants étrangers puissent se mettre dans les quartiers indiqués comme sûrs.

Le corps consulaire vous prie de bien vouloir lui donner d'urgence une réponse sur les points préindiqués, afin que les consuls puissent communiquer vos décisions à leurs ressortissants par avis affichés dans les divers consulats et par avis aux membres de leurs colonies respectives.

Veuillez, &amp;c.

W. A. SMART,  
Doyen du Corps consulaire.

Enclosure 4 in No. 347.

M. Delelée-Desloges to Consul Smart.

Damas, le 30 novembre 1925.

M. le Consul,

En réponse à votre lettre de ce jour, j'ai l'honneur de vous adresser, ci-jointe, la réponse de M. le général commandant les troupes de la région de Damas.

Veuillez, &amp;c.

DELELÉE-DESLOGES.

Enclosure 5 in No. 347.

General Soulé to M. Delelée-Desloges.

Damas, le 30 novembre 1925.

EN réponse à la lettre de M. le consul de Sa Majesté britannique, doyen du corps consulaire, que vous me transmettez, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître que les quartiers qui pourraient être soumis à un bombardement en cas de nécessité absolue sont en principe ceux de Meidan, Jemilié, Kanawat, Schagour.

Je ne crois pas, s'il y a émeute, qu'elle s'étende à d'autres quartiers.

Des mesures sont prises pour garantir les quartiers juifs, chrétiens, Sallhié, Hedjaz, Baramké. Personne ne peut toutefois se porter garant que des émeutiers n'entreront pas dans ces quartiers.

La situation n'indique pas de conseiller aux étrangers de quitter la ville.

Les quartiers qui peuvent être considérés comme les plus sûrs sont ceux de Sallhié et de Jemilié.\*

SOULÉ.

Enclosure 6 in No. 347.

General Soulé to Consul Smart.

Damas, le 30 novembre 1925.

DANS le cas où la nécessité s'imposerait de faire tirer le canon sur un quartier de la ville, la population en sera prévenue par des émissaires.

Dans le cas où le temps manquerait, trois coups de canons seront tirés au préalable au delà de la ville dans la direction du quartier menacé.

Ce sera là un signal pour prévenir les femmes et les enfants de se retirer. Le bombardement réel commencera ensuite après un laps de temps aussi long que les circonstances le permettront.

SOULÉ.

Enclosure 7 in No. 347.

Note de Service.

A PARTIR du 30 novembre 1925 au soir, la circulation est interdite après 18 heures.

Les personnes ayant à circuler après cette heure devront être porteurs d'un nouveau laissez-passer délivré par le Service de la Sûreté (les anciens laissez-passer ne sont plus valables).

Les personnes civiles qui ne se conformeraient pas à cette formalité courraient de graves dangers dans les rues.

Le Délégué,  
DELELÉE-DESLOGES.

Damas, le 30 novembre 1925.

[E 7721/357/89]

No. 348.

Consul Smart to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 14.)

(No. 259.)

Sir,

Damascus, December 2, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 257 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the bands in question left the city in the early hours of the morning of yesterday.

2. The band in the Meydan quarter, before retiring, opened a number of grain stores and took away supplies of grain. It also took off some Nejdian camels, and this has aroused the indignation of Ibn Saud's representative, who proposes to send his Nejdians to fight the bands. M. Béjean, the adviser of police, foolishly encouraged the old man's bellicose intentions. Apparently the French now hope to enlist Nejdian support. If this reckless policy of using native auxiliaries is continued, every race and sect in Syria will be at one another's throats.

3. The band in the Jewish quarter entered several houses and demanded whether any French soldiers were there. On being assured that there were none, the band refrained from molesting anyone. This incident is a sufficient commentary on General Soulé's assurance that arrangements had been made to protect the Jewish and other quarters (see Enclosure 4 of my above-mentioned despatch). I would add that practically the whole of the Christian quarter is entirely unprotected. It is obvious that the French are only seriously protecting the railway and the northern suburbs, where are their troops and the civil and military administrations. I have previously

\* "Jemilié" here is evidently a clerical error, and I have asked the French delegation for a rectification.—W. A. S.

expressed the opinion in several despatches that it is useless to count on French protection at the present moment. I have, of course, ever since the bombardment, warned British subjects that they remain here at their own risk and peril, as I cannot obviously accept responsibility for their safety under the remarkable conditions which the bands and the French between them are causing to prevail at Damascus. The British hospital and the missionaries are reluctant to leave, because their departure would cause great consternation among their numerous dependents and generally among Christians at Damascus. In my opinion, British subjects are in little danger at present from the rebels, but no one can guarantee them against the vagaries of French military action. I am, of course, doing all I can with the means at my disposal to provide for their safety. The rebel leaders have undoubtedly been directing their bands not to enter the Christian quarter. Indeed, it is obvious that the whole band movement is under political control, which, though perhaps unable to restrain particular elements from pillaging, yet is striving to prevent any deliberate action against the Christians. Otherwise, the bands would have before now entered the unprotected Christian quarter.

4. If the French were sensible they would advise all foreign civilians to leave and thus relieve the military of any embarrassment for the safety of foreigners. On the contrary, the civil and military authorities continue to keep up the idle pretence that there is no danger for foreigners in a town which the French themselves contemplate bombarding.

5. Yesterday, between 6 and 7 P.M., a band entered the consulate quarter and attacked the chief police station in it. Firing was furious but mostly in the air, for the police as usual disappeared and the rebels only wanted to frighten any possible opposition. The rebels entered from the northern gardens and left two of their number with each night-watchman encountered on the way in order to prevent his giving alarm. They were apparently out to seize a certain police commissioner named Hussein Mugrabi, who, unlike most of his comrades, had not shown himself accommodating to the bands while he was stationed in the Shaghour quarter. In order to withdraw him from the peril of reprisals, the chief of the police had transferred him to the consulate quarter, remote from the scene of his anti-rebel activities. The rebels, however, followed him up. Having failed to find him, they retired without being in any way molested by the French. The people of my quarter are now anxious that this unpopular policeman should be passed on to another quarter. I need hardly comment on this facility with which a band can penetrate into the middle of a town, attack a police post and then retire unmolested.

6. M. Aubouard, the French delegate who had gone to Beirut to meet the new French High Commissioner, returned to Damascus hurriedly to-day without awaiting M. de Jouvenel's arrival. He rushed into the United States and Italian consulates in the Salhiyyeh quarter (northern suburbs) and warned my colleagues that an attack was expected on that quarter to-night. He did not think it necessary to warn me, though I have repeatedly reminded him that Mr. and Mrs. Lias, British subjects, live in a very exposed position on the outskirts of that quarter (see more particularly my despatch No. 211 of the 15th October last). I sent Mr. Vice-Consul Russell to arrange for the withdrawal of these two British subjects to a safer place and also to the état-major for information. The chief of the staff said that there was no danger and that he did not understand why people were alarmed. This would seem to be yet another instance of the incoherence of the French civil and military authorities.

7. I have been warned by many natives that the bands, which have been multiplying round the town during the last few days, intend to make attacks at this moment by way of welcome to the new French High Commissioner.

8. In the Hauran the Druses are showing great activity and endeavouring to stir the Hauranis to revolt. Sultan Pasha Attarash has himself been leading a Druse force which has been recruiting rebels in the Southern Hauran. The French are bombing a number of villages which have succumbed to Druse incitements. It is probably only the fear of aerial action which prevents the whole Hauran from rising. The rebels recently plundered the stations of Jebab and Khabeb, 63 and 69 kilom. respectively south of Damascus.

9. The railway has again been badly cut just south of Damascus and repaired after 24 hours' interruption.

10. The chiefs of the Druse invaders in the Southern Lebanon, Zeid Attarash and Hamza Derwich, appear to be for the moment in Wadi-al-Ajam.

11. The latest report of the rebel force which attacked Kusseir (see the first paragraph of my despatch No. 256 of the 28th ultimo) is that it is now in the neighbourhood of Jasteh, about 45 kilom. south of Homs and slightly east of the

railway. Another part of the rebel force centred at Nebk has moved northwards to Sadad.

12. Considerable Druse bands are signalled in the Merj and the Ghouta and southwards. Natives seem to fear that their objective is Damascus, but they may well be moving to reinforce their brethren in Wadi-al-Ajam and Wadi Attain.

13. A new band has been formed at Kadem, the first station south of the city, mainly from Meydan recruits. It is commanded by Dib-us-Sheikh, Hassan-al-Kharrat's lieutenant.

14. The bands are now being largely maintained financially and in kind by Damascene notables, who thus purchase immunity for their properties in the countryside under rebel domination. The bands are now obtaining many recruits from the town of Damascus. From my own quarter even recruits have been obtained.

15. A part of rebel action is now outside my consular district, and it is difficult to co-ordinate the movements, but there seems to be a general intention of isolating Damascus and menacing railway communications by operations in the territories separated from Syria to form the Great Lebanon and in the Hauran. The band operations in and around Damascus are doubtless designed to immobilise as many French troops here as possible.

16. I doubt whether the French have any definite notion of how they are going to deal with the present military situation. From the beginning until now the French military leaders have shown no foresight of dangers and movements obvious, long before their realisation, even to non-French civilian observers. I can only account for this improvidence by the incredible ignorance of the Services de Renseignements.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

[E 7767/357/89]

No. 349.

*Consul Smart to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 16.)*

(No. 262.)  
Sir,

*Damascus, December 3, 1925.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 257 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to enclose herewith copy of a letter from the French delegation rectifying an error at the end of General Soulé's communication, a copy of which formed the fourth enclosure of my despatch No. 257 of the 30th ultimo, regarding possibilities of bombardments and disorders at Damascus.

I have also the honour to enclose a copy of the reply of the consular corps to the communications of the French delegation on the subject.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

Enclosure 1 in No. 349.

*M. Bourgeois to Vice-Consul Vaughan-Russell.*

M. le Consul,

*Damas, le 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 1925.*

EN réponse à votre lettre de ce jour, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître qu'une erreur dactylographique s'est glissée dans la lettre du 30 novembre, émanant de M. le Général Soulé et que nous vous avons transmise.

Il convient de remplacer le dernier mot "Jemilié" par "Hamidieh" (caserne).

Veuillez, &c.

Le Délégué du Haut-Commissaire auprès des  
États de Syrie et du Djébel Druse,  
(P.O.) BOURGEOIS.

Enclosure 2 in No. 349.

Consular Corps to French Delegation.

Décanat du Corps consulaire, Damas,  
le 3 décembre 1925.

M. le Délégué,

JE suis chargé par le corps consulaire d'accuser réception de votre lettre du 30 novembre et de votre lettre du 1<sup>er</sup> courant au sujet de possibilités d'émeutes et de bombardements à Damas.

Le corps consulaire vous prie de bien vouloir transmettre à M. le Général Soulé ses remerciements des indications qu'il a bien voulu lui donner et qui seront très utiles aux consuls vis-à-vis de leurs ressortissants respectifs.

Toutefois, le corps consulaire renouvelle le vœu exprimé dans sa lettre collective du 21 octobre passé, c'est-à-dire qu'il sera possible d'organiser la défense de la capitale de la Syrie sur un front militaire hors de la ville, de façon à éviter aux étrangers les périls auxquels ils seront exposés si la ville elle-même est constituée théâtre d'opérations militaires.

En même temps les consuls sont obligés de réservé le droit de leurs Gouvernements respectifs à tenir responsables les autorités mandataires pour tout dommage causé aux personnes et aux biens des étrangers par le fait d'opérations militaires dans la ville de Damas.

Veuillez, &amp;c.

W. A. SMART,  
Doyen du Corps consulaire.

[E 7791/357/89]

No. 350.

Acting Consul-General Mayers to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 16.)

(No. 166.)

Sir,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 162 of the 29th November last, I have the honour to inform you that, after a long preparation during which the town has been bombarded by artillery and bombed from the air, Hasbaya was retaken by the French forces yesterday. The Druses left about a hundred dead behind.

2. The Lebanon is thus now clear again of any large hostile band. Meanwhile public preoccupations in Beirut have been centered more on the political than on the military scene. The new High Commissioner arrived on the 2nd December and was given rather a colourless reception in Beirut, where nobody cared to prognosticate what line he would take. At the reception of the consular corps next day M. de Jouvenel made special reference, in his short conversation with me, to his visit to London, and expressed his hope of a close co-operation between England and France in the Near East. I answered that he could count on receiving from this consulat-general whatever in the way of friendly help would be found possible. When M. de Jouvenel called on me yesterday he spoke in the same vein. Whatever may happen in the future it appears evident that the new High Commissioner begins his administration in Syria with a sincere conviction that an Anglo-French understanding will be the best foundation on which to rebuild the dilapidated house of French prestige in this country.

3. While in Egypt M. de Jouvenel had the extremist demands of the Nationalists presented to him. They were, according to the press, to the effect that all the territory now under French mandate should be given its independence, and should decide, by a temporary national government leading to a duly elected constitutional assembly, what form of government, as a member of the League of Nations, the country should adopt. The new relations between France and Syria were to be decided on by this latter assembly, and only enforced with its consent. They were to be worked out on the basis of Syrian independence, but the Lebanon was free to decide by plebiscite whether she would accept them or not.

4. These proposals, written evidently with an eye on the present régime in Irak, are of such a Damascene cast of thought that discussion of them, I feel, falls outside my province. They were presented in a note from a so-called Syro-Palestine committee backed by two young Moslem journalists sent as emissaries from Beirut for the occasion.

5. From the Beirut and predominantly Christian point of view they present an air of complete unreality. They were greeted with the hostility which the pronouncements of Lutfallah circles in Cairo have always received here. They aroused not only angry comment but also some apprehension. The Lebanon was not quite sure of M. de Jouvenel. He had made so many declarations that he might be capable of anything. To add to the atmosphere of uncertainty a feeling of tension has been growing for some time past between Christians and Moslems in Beirut, and nocturnal alarms in one or two of the outlying quarters, if without any foundation in fact, are at least a symptom of a state of nervousness. Even General Dupont, to whom I expressed my good wishes for the success of the new régime, said he hoped for the best, but that it was necessary to approach Syrian problems, even in the case of a man who had worked with the League of Nations, with very plastic ideas.

6. A violent press campaign was therefore started demanding that there should be no general amnesty, which was evidently considered as possible. An outcry was raised for vengeance on behalf of the victims of the Druses in Rasheya, Kaukaba and other ravished villages. It was demanded that chastisement and repression should precede any attempt at reform. Thus out of the far-off revolt in their mountain of the chieftains of the Druses has come the reawakening of the ancient enmity between Christianity and Islam and a restatement in all its acuteness of the separate individuality of the Lebanon.

7. A demonstration of this individualism, so inimical to any sense of unity in the territory under French mandate, is the motion carried in the Lebanese Representative Council on the day before M. de Jouvenel arrived. It was decided that France was to be congratulated and thanked for having defended from outside aggression, at so great personal loss, the liberty and independence of the Lebanon. Trust in France as the mandatory Power was reaffirmed. Every one of the members knows that, mandatory Power or no mandatory Power, the enemy had been within the gates. However, the motion was carried. There were four dissentient deputies, two Druse and two Moslem. A year ago they would never have dreamed of such originality.

8. The attitude of M. de Jouvenel immediately on his arrival has dispersed many doubts, and a chorus of praise has gone up from the Christian press. He has declared war on those who wish for war, and offered peace to those who seek it. Speaking to the soldiers who defended Rasheya, he said that if to-morrow it should be permitted to him to organise in this country institutions such as make a free nation, then it was to them that the Lebanon would owe not only her safety and her independence, but also her constitution.

9. The churchmen wish nothing better. Their dread of a general amnesty and of an increase in Moslem prestige is dispelled, and they see the danger to their ascendancy in the Lebanon fading away into thin air. To-day M. de Jouvenel has attended a consular mass, such as that described in my despatch No. 139 of the 1st November. He was told from the altar steps that, in spite of changes and chances, the missions of the Church still looked to France as their protector. Satisfaction was written on every ecclesiastical face, while a crowd outside the church applauded the new High Commissioner with enthusiasm.

10. M. de Jouvenel will not therefore, like his immediate predecessor, flout Christian influences. His reputation makes it unlikely that he will allow himself to be engulfed by them. He made a clever and dramatic move when, in thanking the Representative Council of the Great Lebanon for their address mentioned in paragraph 7 above, he stated that, as a recompense for their loyalty and their attachment to peace, the council would be called on to deliberate, France having previously defined her obligations as mandatory Power, on a new constitution for the State.

11. I have the honour to transmit to you herewith M. de Jouvenel's declaration on the subject,\* which has created an exceedingly good impression. It had been known for some time that a new "statut organique" was in preparation, present institutions being merely temporary, and it is generally understood that the deliberations of which M. de Jouvenel speaks will consist of an examination by the council of these proposals, fresh from the hands of the experts in Paris.

12. It is significant that the High Commissioner speaks of the Lebanese as a nation distinct from the rest of Syria. The declaration that similar facilities will be given, when a restoration of peace shall permit it, to the other States under mandate, is also worthy of note, for the promise is also a threat.

\* Not printed.

13. The two American destroyers which have been a month in the harbour are due to leave to-day. Whatever may have been the reasons for bringing them here in the first scare of the invasion of the Great Lebanon, they are clearly now superfluous in Syrian waters.

I have, &c.  
NORMAN MAYERS.

No. 351.

*Consul, Damascus, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 17.)*

(No. 39.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Damascus, December 17, 1925.*

MOSLEM and Druse notables are, with authority of French High Commissioner, proceeding to Jebel Druse and to bands east of Damascus, in order to sound rebel leaders as to possible conditions of peace.

[E 7996/357/89]

No. 352.

*Consul Smart to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 22.)*

(No. 268.)

Sir,

*Damascus, December 9, 1925.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 259 of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to report that the activities of the bands round Damascus have shown no signs of diminishing.

2. The attack anticipated by the French delegation on the Salhiyyeh quarter did not mature (see the sixth paragraph of my above-mentioned despatch).

3. The French have now placed two or three French gendarmes with native police behind barbed-wire entanglements at several entrances of the Christian and Jewish quarters. These posts constitute, in my opinion, a danger rather than a protection. They are inadequate to resist an attack, and they attract the hostile attention of the bands. One post, in the road outside the British hospital, is especially causing me anxiety. The French had for some time made permanent the guard which they had fitfully maintained in the hospital. The provocative nature of this guard (see paragraph 8 of my despatch No. 237 of the 10th ultimo) became much accentuated. Machine guns were put on the roof, and the troops used to fire at rebels who were moving towards other approaches of the town. The soldiers at the gate used to exercise a control over persons entering and leaving the town, often bringing them into the hospital garden to subject them to drastic searches. Finally, the director of the hospital begged me to get the guard removed. This, of course, constituted a delicate task for me. I, however, saw General Soulé, and said that, while we were very grateful for his protection, it seemed that the use of a hospital as a sort of "poste d'avant-garde" was bound to attract enemy fire. I enquired whether it would not be possible to put the troops in a house a little further beyond the hospital towards the open country. General Soulé was fortunately very sensible, and removed the guard altogether from the hospital and from that quarter. Apparently it was not considered safe to place the soldiers where I had suggested. A week ago, however, the above-mentioned gendarmerie police post was placed in the road outside the hospital, and it began to exercise the same control over passers-by as the old guard within the hospital. Such a police control is naturally unpopular with all natives, rebels or not, and the post exercising it would, anyhow, attract animosities. On the night of the 3rd-4th December the rebels vented their resentment by heavy firing at this post, and three of their bullets hit the hospital, fortunately high up. It must be obvious to the French that the presence of this post under the walls of the hospital is a danger to the latter. They should, of course, move the post a couple of hundred yards further out towards the open country. It is difficult to avoid the belief that the French feel safer in the shadow of the British hospital.

4. On the 7th instant, during the day, a band made a more regular attack on the French troops in the barracks at Kadem, the southern suburb station of Damascus. Here the French keep permanently a respectable force for the protection of the railway. Fighting went on all day, and the French artillery fired across the

town for several hours. A squadron of Spahis was rather unwise used to attempt to drive the rebels out of the olive-groves, from which they were firing. These groves were not, of course, favourable for cavalry movements, and the Spahis had to retire with some casualties. No casualties are given out by the French, but from various moderate reports it seems likely that they lost about twenty killed, including one officer. The Red Cross ambulances were passing to and from this southern quarter of the town during the afternoon, but it is impossible to estimate the French wounded. It is equally impossible to estimate the casualties of the rebels, who dispersed at nightfall.

5. For several days the French have been indulging in nightly cannonades across the town at various villages in the Ghouta. The colder weather makes it uncomfortable for the bands to remain out of doors all night. The aeroplanes have been marking the villages to which the bands were retiring at dark. The guns, then several times each night, have been bombarding the villages thus marked. No less than fifty-eight shells, as counted by a newspaper correspondent here, were fired at 4 A.M. one day. Several villages have been badly damaged, and the French say that they found, on the morrow of one such bombardment, fourteen men killed in one of the villages. I hope that they were rebels, but they may just as easily have been non-combatants. These new tactics seem to be more costly in shells than effective in inflicting casualties on the enemy.

6. Incidentally, it is difficult to see how, in view of this miscellaneous and frequent artillery fire across the town from several directions, any given quarter could recognise the three warning gunshots which, passing over its head into the open country, are supposed to notify its coming bombardment (see Enclosure 5 in my despatch No. 257 of the 30th ultimo).

7. One of the villages thus bombarded, Kabr-us-Sitt, has an old mosque in which is the tomb of Zeinab, the sister of Hussein. The French gunners appear to have fired with great precision, for, though the village was badly damaged, the mosque received no direct hits and appears to have suffered very slightly. The Persians here were, of course, anxious for the safety of this peculiarly Shia shrine.

8. In the Hauran, French aerial bombing and arrests of notables are counteracting, apparently with success, the Druse efforts to provoke a general Haurani rising.

9. Almost every night attacks are made by the rebels on the outskirts of the town, but as both they and the French troops rarely get into close contact, most of the firing is innocuous. I cannot attempt to recount in detail the vagaries of the guerilla in the outlying country.

10. Heavy fighting has been in progress in Wadi-al-Ajam, but nothing conclusive appears to have hitherto resulted therefrom.

11. The bands along the Eastern Anti-Lebanon have been pushing northwards and have got astride the Homs-Palmyra road. There are reports of quarrels between the band leaders. It is said that Hassan-al-Kharrat, who is reported to be more disinterested than the others, objects to the predatory activities of Akkasheh and Ramadan Shalash. He is even reported to have threatened violent measures against the person of the latter.

12. M. de Jouvenel has announced that he is not coming to Damascus until Damascus is ready to receive him, and that meanwhile Southern Syria is to be left to General Gamelin to deal with. He has refused to make any conciliatory offers or constitutional concessions until the rebels return to the ways of peace. The rebels, on the other hand, refuse to stop hostilities until they know what they are to get in exchange.

13. It is to be hoped that M. de Jouvenel, immobilised in the Christian atmosphere of Beirut, will not get a false perspective of the essentially Moslem problem of Syria. No amount of Maronite satisfaction with him in the Lebanon will help to settle the rebellion in the non-Christian interior. A number of Damascenes have gone to Beirut to see the new High Commissioner, but none of them are, of course, of the Nationalist persuasion.

14. Anyhow, for the moment, "la manière forte" seems to be in favour. A number of the remaining Nationalist notables of Damascus have just been arrested.

15. If this policy is to be pursued, the French must make up their minds to increase their troops and to suffer heavy casualties. Nothing can be achieved by them if they continue to sit behind their defences and bombard the open country with artillery. The magnitude of the military problem hardly seems to have been realised by the French. Behind all the present battlefields, in Wadi-al-Ajam, in the Hauran,

around Kuneitra, Damascus, Nebk, Homs, looms always the inviolate mountain, which no army has yet thoroughly conquered in the course of history. If the French are to succeed where Egyptian and Turk failed, they must, after sweeping back the bands from the urban centres and the lines of communications, be prepared for a grand and costly offensive against the Jebel Druse. Obviously, no action against the bands in the open country can settle the rebellion unless its mountain base is subdued. The question seems to be whether public opinion in France will permit casualties on the scale necessitated by such heavy operations. Moreover, even if finally victorious at the price of much treasure and blood, the French will find themselves masters of a completely ruined country, which can only be restored to vitality by a long and costly administrative and economic effort, probably beyond France's capacity. Even now it seems fairly evident that no Syrian budget will be possible next year without subsidies from France. Taxes cannot be paid by regions ruined by the rebels or the French troops, and will not be paid by districts no longer under French control.

16. Colonel Andréa, until now Governor of the Jebel Druse *in partibus*, has been appointed military commander of Damascus, and new French officers have just arrived here to reorganise the gendarmerie and the police; but I propose to report in a separate despatch on this development, which is expected to coincide with political changes in the Syrian Government.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 8077/357/89]

No. 353.

*Consul Hough to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 29.)*  
(No. 85.)

Sir,

*Aleppo, December 14, 1925.*  
I HAVE the honour to report that M. de Jouvenel, the new High Commissioner, has just concluded a three days' visit to Aleppo. The honour of this visit, coming so soon after the High Commissioner's arrival in the country, was rather unexpected, and it was allowed to be inferred that, in some measure, it might be taken as a mark of approval of the peaceful behaviour of Aleppo during the recent troubles.

2. The town showed lavish hospitality to the High Commissioner during his stay, but it cannot be said that his visit provoked any overwhelming enthusiasm. The new High Commissioner is still an entirely unknown quantity, and represents to the average mind merely the latest of an already considerable line of High Commissioners, under whose succession of brief reigns the prosperity of the country has not increased cumulatively. The population have apparently decided that their policy should be to wait and see, without exaggerated hopes. However, M. de Jouvenel made an exceedingly favourable impression on everyone he met, by his obvious qualities of broadmindedness, willingness to learn, and impartiality, added to considerable personal charm.

3. In the following paragraphs I submit some notes on certain points of detail with which the High Commissioner dealt. I can vouch for their accuracy, as the matters to which I was not a personal witness were told to me by M. René François, "chef du cabinet civil," whom I sat next to at dinner.

4. In receiving the consular body M. de Jouvenel made a special point of addressing himself to my Turkish colleague, and assured him that Turkey would be quite mistaken in regarding the Treaty of Locarno as a sign that the Western Powers were banding themselves together to the detriment of certain eastern States. The true purport of this instrument was, he affirmed, an extension of the spirit which had brought about the Anglo-French *entente* to other countries, and an adumbration of the time when the same spirit of mutual understanding and accommodation would embrace more and more countries. There is no doubt that, apart from the Treaty of Locarno, M. de Jouvenel's visit to London has given the Turks the impression that England and France are leagued together against them.

5. M. de Jouvenel saw everybody at Aleppo who might have anything to contribute to his knowledge of the place, not excepting the anti-mandate extremists. Generally speaking, the requests made by the Aleppins fell into three broad categories: (a) That Aleppo should be made the capital of Syria; (b) that Aleppo should be given independence of Damascus; (c) that he should do something to

improve their commerce. I will deal separately with the way M. de Jouvenel dealt with these requests.

6. The High Commissioner said that the location of the capital of Syria was a matter for the Syrians themselves, in which the mandatory Power had no cause to intervene. He suggested that if the Aleppo interest could show itself in a majority, the transference of the capital would simply resolve itself into a matter for the State Assembly to vote on. This was not the only case in which the High Commissioner showed that his intention was to persuade and guide the Syrians to manage their own affairs, however great the demands which this policy might make on the patience of the mandatory Power.

7. As regards the proposal for greater or complete autonomy for Aleppo, the High Commissioner was on the whole very sympathetic, and declared publicly in a speech that, while no promises could be given until he had had time to tackle the great difficulties which the administrative organisation of Syria presented, the desiderata of Aleppo in this connection should have his most sympathetic consideration.

8. The local attitude regarding the economic welfare of Aleppo seems slightly to have perplexed the High Commissioner. I gathered that the business representatives had been singularly barren in suggestions, and appeared to take the line that their business was bad, and that it appertained to the rulers to do something about it. When asked what, they said that it was the business of the ruling classes to know what. In the High Commissioner's suggestions for new roads and so forth, they seemed to be only slightly interested, but watched open-eyed and open-mouthed to see in what order of precedence he would return the calls of the ecclesiastical dignitaries. There may be a touch of caricature in an account given fancifully during dinner, but, broadly speaking, the account is not out of character. I have, in previous despatches, adverted to the extremely elementary degree of the political capacity and insight of the natives of Aleppo, even in matters which concern them vitally.

9. It is too early yet to say what good effects the High Commissioner's visit may have had, but it is unfortunately true that the political prognosis of Aleppo is not so good at this moment as it has been. The rich Moslem landowners, who form the backbone of the anti-mandate caucus, are coming out more into the open, even though there are no signs yet that they intend to take active steps to realise their wishes, or know what steps to take. The Vali, I know with certainty, has five times presented his resignation on account of differences with the French authorities, but has been persuaded to withdraw it. I do not know the nature of these differences. Finally, the non-participation of Aleppo in the rebellion has irritated the more ardent patriots of other districts, who seem to be intending that Aleppo shall show its patriotism willy-nilly. To achieve this result it is said that emissaries have gone to the region of Killis and Aintab to raise bands, who are to harry Aleppo till it breaks out. The last statement is the only one in this despatch which I give with a slight reserve. I have names and particulars to some extent, it is true, but the inventive capacity of local gossip is hard to assess.

I have, &c.  
W. HOUGH.

No. 354.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 29.)*

(No. 77.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, December 28, 1925.*  
FOLLOWING for Air Ministry from liaison officer:—

"Amnesty granted to rebels handing over arms by the 8th January. Leaders submitting by the 8th January will not suffer death penalties. High Commissioner not optimistic of results, and expects further expeditions against Jebel Druse will be necessary in the spring."

(Repeated to Bagdad and Palestine.)

[E 8140/357/89]

No. 355.

*Consul Smart to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 30.)*

(No. 270.)

Sir,

*Damascus, December 11, 1925.*

IN continuation of correspondence ending with my despatch No. 268 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to report that several bands entered the town and attacked the outskirts of the Christian quarter yesterday morning.

2. One band, just before 11 A.M., entered the consulate quarter with the usual accompaniment of firing in the air. The consulate was then full of clients waiting for visas, &c. An armed Syrian soldier of the Mixed Syrian Regiment, who happened to be passing through my quarter, took refuge in the consulate, evidently labouring under strong emotion. I telephoned to the French delegate and asked him what I was to do with the refugee. M. Aubouard replied that he would ask the *état-major* to send to fetch him, and that meanwhile I should keep him in the consulate. I need hardly say that no one ventured into the town to fetch him, and he stayed in the consulate until the afternoon, when I sent him away.

3. The band seized all the rifles and ammunition of the police and went across the town unhindered towards another band which, about the same time, entered by the Christian quarter and passed through the Bab-us-Selam quarter towards mine, picking up all the police rifles and ammunition to be found on the way. Two policemen were taken off as prisoners by these bands, which disappeared subsequently without any difficulty. These bands molested no one except the police, and indulged in no plundering.

4. About the same time another band attacked the French post under the walls of the British hospital (see paragraph 3 of my above-mentioned despatch).

5. As soon as I had finished my telephonic conversation with M. Aubouard, I made my way down to the Christian quarter, picking up a guide from Amir Said on the way. At every alley leading out of the quarter into the gardens were stationed police, who occasionally fired down these alleys at nothing, as far as I could see. When I got to the hospital I found the French installed in its tower firing with Lewis guns and rifles at the rebels in the gardens beyond. An armoured car was stationed just outside the barbed-wire entanglements in front of the hospital and was, with its small gun, bombarding the rebels. Immediately over the heads of the French in the tower was flying the British flag.

6. Dr. Brigstocke, the director of the hospital, explained to me what had happened. When the fighting began he was engaged on a serious operation. The French assistant adviser of police and two French gendarmes came to the locked gate of the hospital and demanded admittance. The matron came down and tried to explain, through an inadequate Arab interpreter, that she could not open without the permission of the doctor. The French civilian official seemed to be very excited and said that they were being exposed to danger by this delay in opening the gate. The matron, however, went back to see Dr. Brigstocke, who could not interrupt the operation to discuss matters. Meanwhile, the French forcibly effected an entrance. Though none of the English staff know quite what happened, it appears that the French hoisted over the wall two boys, who forced the old female gatekeeper to surrender the keys. Anyhow, when Dr. Brigstocke was able to leave the operating-room he found the French already installed in the tower as described above.

7. The rebels, of course, responded to the fire from the tower, and by the time I arrived three bullets had already passed through the window at the end of the long corridor into which the wards opened. The women's ward and the operating-room were especially exposed to any fire coming from the rebel quarter.

8. No officer was visible anywhere, but I spoke to the French gendarme who appeared to be in charge of the operations. I pointed out to him that, by using the hospital for military operations, he was exposing its inmates to danger. He was apologetic, said that he had only entered after having obtained permission, that he had thought the rebels might attack the hospital, that, anyhow, he would not do it again. Needless to say, no permission to enter had been granted. However, to the relief of us all, he and his comrades withdrew from the hospital and joined the others round the armoured car in the road. The firing went on for some time, but the rebels were evidently no longer replying, and presumably disappearing.

9. I called this morning on Colonel Andréa, who has replaced General Soulé as military commander at Damascus. I pointed out the danger to the hospital caused

by the action of the French and begged him to study the question carefully, with a view to devising means of conciliating the safety of the hospital with the military dispositions necessary at that entrance of the town. I urged that the post in the road should be moved a couple of hundred yards further towards the open country, in front of several houses abandoned by their inmates, so that, in the event of attack, the rebel bullets would not go into the hospital.

10. Colonel Andréa was very apologetic. He said that he had been misinformed. He had been told that the hospital tower had only been used for purposes of observation. He promised to move the post 50 yards further out, but he could not promise to move it more than that. He said that, of course, if we did not want a guard in the hospital he could not be responsible for a rebel attack on it. I said that we seemed to be in a quandary and that I had come to ask his advice. The director of the hospital was more afraid of rebel fire being attracted by the French post than of a direct rebel attack.

11. Colonel Andréa told me that he was shortly going to start an offensive in the Ghouta and the Merj, and that he would not be content with dispersing the bands but would garrison various points in the surrounding country so as to keep it in order and prevent any more rebel attacks on the town. Moreover, Commandant Lavigne and Captain Bouvin, the officers mentioned in the last paragraph of my above-mentioned despatch, were, under his direction, going to stir up the gendarmerie and establish gendarmerie barrages at various entrances of the town. He hoped in this way to prevent the renewal of incidents such as those of the previous day.

12. Our conversation was exceedingly friendly, and I got the impression that Colonel Andréa is likely to be more active than General Soulé, who, I gather, is returning to France.

13. I then called on M. Aubouard and told him of my conversation with Colonel Andréa. M. Aubouard thought that the attack on my quarter was a political demonstration against the recent arrest by the French of one of its notables. M. Aubouard was of opinion that the storm was passing from the Christian to the Salhiyyeh quarter, in the neighbourhood of which bands had been signalled. As a matter of fact one band in the afternoon could be seen with the naked eye on the hill above the Salhiyyeh quarter.

14. M. Aubouard said that there were now seven battalions at Damascus, and that these reinforcements made any further danger unlikely. Moreover, all the gendarmes on the Beirut road had been withdrawn and concentrated at Damascus.

15. This withdrawal of the gendarmes from the Beirut road had, although M. Aubouard did not mention it, been necessitated by the fact that they would all have been slaughtered if they had been left there any longer. Although these gendarmes never emerged from their posts to interfere with the bandits, the latter had latterly become quite unreasonable, attacking the inoffensive gendarmes in their shelters and killing and wounding several. The gendarmes' presence on, or absence from, the road does not affect its insecurity.

16. After leaving the delegation I went down to the British hospital, where I found the French, from the barrage on the road, preparing again for hostilities. However, they only used a tank gun and fired with rifles and Lewis guns for about half an hour towards the gardens, with what result I cannot say. My gendarme friend of the previous day greeted me very amicably and said that there were between 1,200 and 2,000 rebels in the gardens. He had evidently been affected by the Oriental atmosphere of exaggeration. He said that the French had on the previous day picked up two dead rebels in the gardens by the hospital.

17. An inhabitant of the adjoining village of Jobar, which had been fired on from the hospital tower on the previous day, told the doctor that the rebels had wanted to attack the hospital, and had argued that, in view of the fire coming from its roof, it could not be the British but must be the French hospital. However, no effect was given to this intention, if, indeed, it were not merely an invention of the narrator.

18. A considerable body of French troops and native irregulars passed right through the town this afternoon and past the British hospital into the open country, accompanied by aeroplanes flying low. Another force was sent through the Salhiyyeh quarter into the gardens, and the two forces are perhaps trying to round up the rebels in the north-eastern outskirts, which aeroplanes had been bombing in the morning.

19. There are now so many troops in Damascus that the French, it would seem, can have no difficulty in preventing serious attacks on the town, though farcical raids as those described at the beginning of this despatch may continue.

20. The nightly cannonading across the town towards distant villages (see paragraph 5 of my above-mentioned despatch) continues. Colonel Andréa told me that he found it exasperating as it prevented him from sleeping, but that it was useful in harrying the rebels. I suggested that he would soon get used to it.

21. In view of this deflection of band activity towards the Christian quarter, I have advised British subjects, in case of trouble, not to make for the British hospital, as previously suggested, but to stay in their houses or come to the consulate if practicable.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

[E 8139/357/89]

No. 356.

*Acting Consul-General Mayers to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 30.)*

(No. 171.)  
Sir,

*Beirut, December 14, 1925.*

IN comparison with the excitement of previous weeks, the past week has been quiet in the Lebanon. The trains from Damascus, arriving at very irregular intervals owing to sabotage on the line, bring in consignments of persons seeking a change of air or a visa for Egypt. Several committees are getting to work in a small way on the problem of the refugees from the more troubled areas. All idea of any real menace to Beirut has vanished, although military patrols now unostentatiously make the rounds of the streets at night. The Christians have been especially pleased by the visit paid by M. de Jouvenel to the octogenarian Maronite Patriarch in his mountain palace, and by the enthusiastic references made on the occasion to the ties between the Lebanon and France. The Moslems, away in the shade, have said very little. They are probably waiting to see what will be the result of the talk about constitutions.

2. The High Commissioner disappeared about the middle of the week and reappeared in Aleppo, which is now, after the fashion of Damascus, beginning to be the subject of dark rumours here. M. de Jouvenel is now back safely in Beirut.

3. Rumour too has given away a considerable slice of the Southern Lebanon to Palestine. The cession would bring the Palestine frontier up to where the Litani falls into the sea above Tyre, and thus give that country access to its waters. It would have the effect of handing over to the British mandate a territory predominantly inhabited by the Druses, in that way dividing up, into unequal parts it is true, the government of that troublesome people.

4. The Moslems of the Lebanon consider that a return to the frontiers of the Small Lebanon should indeed be made, but their scheme is that the strip of territory thus trimmed from the Great Lebanon of present days should return to the State of Syria. The Christians, on the other hand, have never swerved from their loyalty to a Great Lebanon, which was created to secure the permanence of their predominance and to be the bedrock of French influence in the mandated territory. Recent events, they claim, have proved the efficacy of their policy. The anti-Lebanon is a useful barrier to the East; without the protection which the region of Judeide, Hasbaya and Rasheya constitutes, the rebels would have invaded the Lebanon proper and set a torch to the Shouf. For the future of peace and the mandate, they say, the Lebanon must rest as she is, a State attached by principles of fidelity to the mandatory Power on whom she has always relied, and sheltered by her present frontiers from attacks by her enemies from the interior of Syria.

5. Deliberations in the Representative Council over the "statut organique" have begun, in accordance with the declarations of M. de Jouvenel. Twelve members have been elected to form a committee which, in collaboration with other nominees chosen on a regional and confessional basis, will work on the new Constitution. As was pointed out in my despatch No. 166 of the 6th instant, paragraph 2, it is understood by some people that the draft Constitution is already born into the world, and came out to Syria, in fact, in one of the portfolios of M. de Jouvenel. This impression probably accounts for a question asked by the Emir Fouad Arslan, Druse Deputy of the Shouf, when he was elected to be member of the Committee of Twelve. He asked whether, when the representatives of the Lebanon had completed their deliberations, their decisions would have any validity, the mandate having laid

down that the Constitution was to be the joint work of the local authorities and the mandatory Power. The reply made by the French delegate was to the effect that the High Commissioner's approbation of the committee's findings would constitute the collaboration to which reference was made.

I have, &c.  
NORMAN MAYERS.

[E 8137/3440/89]

No. 357.

*Consul Smart to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 30.)*

(No. 273.)  
Sir,

*Damascus, December 17, 1925.*

WITH reference to your telegram No. 29 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report that, as the new French High Commissioner showed no sign of coming over to Damascus for the present, I thought it advisable to make a brief trip to Beirut in order to visit his Excellency, so that I might be free to seize the first opportunity of starting from here for Amman and Jerusalem. The concentration of ten battalions at Damascus and the beginning of the advance into the Ghouta (see paragraph 11 of my despatch No. 270 of the 11th instant) seemed to promise, for a few days at least, some tranquillity in the town of Damascus. As a matter of fact, I only just got back to Damascus in time for an attack by the rebels, in the neighbourhood of the British hospital, on the expeditionary force returning to the town, but I am reporting on this affair in a separate despatch.

2. M. de Jouvenel received me with great kindness. He hoped, he said, that I had retained no disagreeable memories of the past, which, as far as he was concerned, could be regarded as entirely obliterated. He was very grateful for the friendly sentiments towards France expressed in my reports which you had read to him.

3. I told him that personally I would have been very glad if the French officials in Syria had been able to secure my removal. Things had been made very unpleasant for me, even in quite personal ways. Apparently, the British consul at Damascus could not fail to become an object of suspicion to French officials here. There was the Faisal past, which France at Damascus did not seem able to forget. Then, owing to the peculiar position of Damascus, every time French officials were discontented with some development in our neighbouring mandatory countries which reacted on Syria they were inclined to visit their displeasure on the British official at Damascus.

4. M. de Jouvenel replied that he was determined not to allow this atmosphere of suspicion to continue. From his experience at the League of Nations, he knew that when England and France were disunited everything went wrong; when they were united all difficulties were smoothed away.

5. I assured him that he could count on me never to do anything against France at Damascus, but I hoped that he would not listen too easily to accusations made against me.

6. He replied that he would never allow himself to be thus influenced, and that, if charges were made against me, he would refer them to me quite precisely for explanation.

7. I told him that I had been instructed by you not to proceed to Transjordania and Palestine before seeing him.

8. M. de Jouvenel said that he hoped, as soon as he had got free from his first urgent labours, to pay a visit to Lord Plumer at Jerusalem. Meanwhile, to give effect to the promises he had made to you and Mr. Amery, he was deputing Colonel Mailles to open negotiations with our mandatory authorities with a view to frontier delimitations.

9. The choice of this delegate appears to be happy, for Colonel Mailles, who was on the Turco-Syrian Frontier Commission, has been reported as Anglophilic and anti-Turk by His Majesty's consul at Aleppo.

10. I gathered that Colonel Mailles would proceed almost immediately to Jerusalem.

11. M. de Jouvenel then enquired whether we could tentatively examine the possibility of some co-operation in Bedouin control. He had already noticed that his Bedouin control officers, in supporting demands for subsidies to be paid to

Bedouin chiefs, used to urge that the British paid these chiefs large sums and that consequently the French must do likewise. He was inclined to think that these chiefs, merely to fill their own pockets, were trying to induce the English and French to outbid each other.

12. Obviously French officials at Damascus had been reporting to the French High Commissioner, no doubt with distortions, our negotiations with the Ruala for the safeguarding of the Amman-Bagdad route. Although I had not yet received Colonel Cox's authority to speak to the French about this matter (see my despatch No. 269 of the 10th instant), I took upon myself to explain to M. de Jouvenel that we were paying an extremely modest subsidy to Noori Shaalan for the very definite purpose of safeguarding a road in Transjordania and Irak which ran through Ruala territory.

13. On this particular point, and generally in our conversation, I was somewhat hampered by the fact that M. de Jouvenel has not, of course, yet had time to get familiar with names of tribes or persons, geographical or political details in Southern Syria. He soon got out of his depth, and contented himself with expressing the hope that we would think the matter over.

14. M. de Jouvenel then referred to the question of armed Druses, when hard pressed by the French, crossing into Palestine. A report had been received that a dozen armed Druses had recently crossed the Palestinian frontier near Hasbeya, had been arrested and disarmed, but had subsequently been allowed to re-enter Syria with their arms. He did not believe this report, which, as a matter of fact, had been contradicted by a subsequent report. However, he hoped that we would take care of any Druses thus crossing into our territory.

15. I said that I had already heard this story from Major Salisbury-Jones, who had heard it from Commandant Dentz, the head of the "Services de Renseignements." The story did not sound at all likely.

16. M. de Jouvenel said that he had given orders that no more Turkish troops should be allowed to pass eastwards along the Bagdad Railway; he had just refused permission for a number of Turkish mitrailleuses to be passed along that line.

17. M. de Jouvenel also referred to the situation in Southern Syria. He said that he could, of course, have at once paid a perfunctory visit to Damascus, but, at present, he could have made no pronouncement there. He preferred to wait until he could go to Damascus with something definite to offer. Meanwhile, he was discussing the situation with numerous Damascene notables who had been coming to Beirut. I agreed that it seemed wiser for him to talk matters over at Beirut with Damascene envoys, who would speak much more frankly outside of the troubled atmosphere of Damascus.

18. M. de Jouvenel detained me for a considerable time, and when I took leave of him he said that he hoped soon to return my visit at Damascus.

19. In short, our whole conversation was of a most friendly and even intimate nature. M. de Jouvenel appeared to speak with the frankness of one convinced that he was dealing with a friend of his country. His friendliness was no doubt due to your intervention, for which I venture to express my respectful thanks.

20. M. de Jouvenel hardly gave me the impression of being a man of action. It is doubtful whether intelligence, broad-mindedness and sympathy, all of which he seems to possess, will be enough to bring back disordered Syria to the ways of peace. The Oriental is, in the end, only impressed by the perception of personal power in the man he has to deal with.

I have, &c.  
W. A. SMART.

E 8141/357/89

No. 358.

*Consul Smart to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 30.)*

(No. 278.)

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 270 of the 11th instant, I have the honour to report that the French advance into the Ghouta and the Merj began on the 14th instant, after a preliminary bombardment of various points in the eastern gardens lasting for about an hour. Light and heavy guns, from the citadel in the town, from the arsenal in the northern suburbs and from Fort Gouraud on a hill

dominating Damascus from the south-west, were used in this bombardment. Bombing aeroplanes accompanied the force in its advance.

2. It would appear that very little fighting took place, the bands, of course, having made themselves scarce. Some prisoners were brought in, but it is not clear whether they were armed rebels or non-combatant inhabitants of villages in the zone of operations. Captain Georges Picot, Colonel Andréa's chief of the staff, admitted to me that no Druses could have been in this eastern garden area, for, had they been there, the French could not have had such insignificant casualties—six wounded, according to him.

3. After having established posts at various points in the Ghouta and the Merj, some at the extreme limits of the oasis, the bulk of the expeditionary force returned to the town on the 16th instant. In the afternoon of that day the retiring force was attacked on both its flanks as it approached the town. On its left flank the attack took place only about half a mile from the British hospital. Firing was fairly intense, but apparently the troops and the rebels did not get into very close contact.

4. The French official communiqué claims that 400 rebels were killed. This figure is obviously ridiculous, unless the troops have been killing peaceful villagers and counting them as rebel casualties.

5. I reached Damascus on that day at 4:30 P.M., after my visit to M. de Jouvenel at Beirut, and I had some difficulty in getting across the town from the station to the British hospital owing to the block caused in the streets by the returning troops, which seemed to be very numerous, for the head of the column was in the northern suburbs long before its tail had entered the town from the other end. I reached the hospital shortly after 5 P.M., just as the rearguard, mainly consisting of tanks, was entering the town.

6. I found that Colonel Andréa had moved the French post (see my above-mentioned despatch) 200 yards beyond the hospital, which, I learnt from the director, had on this occasion been troubled by no stray bullets.

7. It is said that villagers, exasperated by the threat of the military authorities to cut down all trees within a certain radius of the city, were responsible for this attack on the retiring French troops, and that they were encouraged in their audacity by the belief that the retirement implied a French defeat. The French are taking advantage of the military situation to put into execution an old plan for making a broad boulevard along the north-eastern edge of the town, to connect the modern quarter of Salhiyeh with the Bagdad road. The pretext is that this boulevard is necessary for the movement of troops. Trees are being cut down, without, for the moment, any consideration of proprietary rights or compensation.

8. The approach of the offensive was generally known, and, for several days beforehand, the rebels devoted considerable attention to the Damascus-Beirut Railway, no doubt with a view to impeding the movement of troops and supplies. On the evening of the 11th instant, a band pulled up 300 yards of the line and destroyed a culvert at Tekiyeh, 30 kilom. from Damascus, burnt the railway station and attacked the electric power station there, which supplies Damascus with electricity. The power station was defended by live wires, which are said to have killed at least one rebel, by its employees and by gendarmes, who apparently put up a good fight, until they were relieved by an armoured train. The line was repaired after an interruption of thirty-six hours.

9. On the night of the 12th-13th instant, another band cut the line at Yafoofa, 66 kilom. from Damascus, but this damage was repaired after an interruption of twelve hours. Yafoofa, it may be remarked, is guarded by French troops, which were apparently outnumbered and had to retreat before the band.

10. On the 17th instant, the band of Akkasheh was reported a few hundred yards east of the station of Ain Fijeh (21 kilom. from Damascus), where is the source of the drinking-water supply of Damascus. An armoured train was at once sent to the spot, and the band disappeared.

11. Almost every night the bands have been firing at passing trains, but these demonstrations have hitherto been innocuous.

12. On my way back from Beirut I found the station of Zebdani, the capital of that railway district, full of refugees from villages along the line, flying from the bands and the French troops. The Kaimakam of Zebdani got into my train and announced that he had just resigned owing to what he described as a wanton bombardment, by a French armoured train, of a small village called Medayeh, close to the line. According to him, this village was quite peaceful. A band had

entered and left it, the villagers being powerless to resist. Subsequently it had been bombarded by the French, who had killed eight harmless villagers and wounded a number of others. A shell had also killed a gendarme, who had a few hours before been bastinadoed by the rebels for refusing to co-operate with them.

13. Of course, native presentations of such affairs must be taken with caution, but I fear that, owing to the absence of political officers with the forces, much destruction of innocent villages is effected by French troops ignorant of local conditions.

14. On my return journey from Beirut I noticed that the number of French posts along the line had been increased, and that the previously existing posts had been reinforced. Several villages close to the line had the appearance of being deserted by their inhabitants.

15. Bands have also been in evidence along the railway south of Homs, and one band attacked and plundered the station at Kusseir, the scene of the murder of the three French civilian employees of the cadastre last month (see paragraph 1 of my despatch No. 256 of 28th ultimo). Incidentally, I was recently informed by a French employee of the cadastre that these three unfortunate Frenchmen were not murdered by the band, which contented itself with stripping them. They were murdered after the departure of the band by landowners of Kusseir, who resented a cadastral restriction of their land usurpations.

16. Further north, around Hama, the situation appears to have improved owing to the submission of the Mawali tribe, which participated in the Hama revolt of last October.

17. Early this morning the troops, after a very brief preliminary bombardment, moved out of Damascus again, with the object of establishing new posts and of sweeping the rebels into the various posts previously established in the eastern oasis. The village of Jobar, close to the British hospital, came in for considerable attention, and several British refugees from it arrived at the consulate during the course of the day with the usual excited tales of French violence. The city, indeed, is full of refugees. The expeditionary force returned to the town at sunset. No doubt further expeditions of this kind are to follow.

18. It is unlikely that the bands proper, as distinct from villagers, who on occasion join them, have remained in the area being swept by the French troops. As a matter of fact, it is improbable that considerable bands can any longer find sufficient food supplies in this stricken area, which the bands and the French between them have by now denuded. I gather from Captain Picot that the French are realising the folly of destroying villages and propose to adopt a system of hostages (see paragraph No. 9 of my despatch No. 240 of the 13th ultimo) to be taken from the different villages in the Merj and the Ghouta.

19. While attempting to clear up the eastern garden area, Colonel Andréa apparently hopes to disarm the town of Damascus, from which the bands are largely recruited. He has just issued a proclamation to the effect that all arms and ammunition in the city must be surrendered before the 1st January, 1926, after which date anyone in whose possession search has revealed arms or ammunition will be brought before the military tribunal. Needless to say, the disarmament of an Oriental town like Damascus will be exceedingly difficult.

20. There is now much talk at Damascus of peace negotiations. As reported in my telegram No. 39 of the 17th instant, deputations are proceeding to the Jebel Druse and to the bands east of Damascus, with a view to sounding the rebel leaders as to the terms of peace they would be prepared to accept. Amir Arslan, a Lebanon Druse, who has been once exiled for his anti-French activities, is a member of the first deputation. Emir Tahir, the cousin of Emir Said, who was recently released owing to the intervention of His Majesty's Government (see correspondence ending with my despatch No. 250 of the 19th ultimo) is a member of the second deputation. The members of both deputations had discussed the matter at Beirut with M. de Jouvenel, who gave them assurances that their missions would not be disapproved of. Some of the members travelled in the train by which I returned from Beirut. Apparently the great difficulty will be the question of an amnesty, which the rebels will certainly desire to be general, while the French apparently wish to limit it to cover only political rebellion as distinct from freebooting—a distinction not always easy to make. Amir Arslan says that the Jebel Druse does not wish to be independent, but would prefer to be included in the Syrian Unity. Apparently the Druses feel that they would be safer against any oppression such as that of Captain Carbillet, if they were part of a Syrian State whose Government could intercede

for them. In this connection, I would invite a reference to my despatch No. 82 of the 13th May last for the negotiations between the Druse chiefs and the Nationalists before the rebellion.

21. An important deputation of Damascene notables, elected at a meeting held at the municipality, wishes to proceed to Beirut to discuss the situation with M. de Jouvenel. The deputation is fairly representative of political and non-political elements of the population. There seems to be some doubt as to whether M. de Jouvenel is prepared to receive the deputation at present. All elements appear to think that the election of a Constituent Assembly to decide the future organisation of the State must be promised by the French, if the rebels are to be placated.

22. I have on various occasions expressed the opinion that the French would be well advised to seek a settlement by negotiation. The military effort required for a settlement by war alone will necessitate sacrifice of blood and money probably too great for French public opinion to accept. The present moment appears to be particularly favourable to peace negotiations. The rebels and the people generally, those who have supported the rebels and those who have not, have all suffered grievously, and there are rumours that rebel ammunition is not too plentiful. All would probably welcome any settlement guaranteeing them against French reprisals and a continuance of the extremer methods of French colonial administration. But obviously terms must be offered which will hold out to the rebels prospects of a state of affairs less intolerable than that involved in a continuance of the war. It is to be hoped that the French will not be deterred by fears of loss of prestige from offering such terms to the rebels. It is most desirable that progress should be made with negotiations before disorders break out elsewhere, in Northern Syria, for instance, whither Yusuf Bey Hayati, Sultan Atrash's chief of the staff, is reported to have proceeded some time ago with a view to stirring up trouble there.

I have, &c.

W. A. SMART.

[E 8164/357/89]

No. 359.

*Acting Consul-General Norman Mayers to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 31.)*

(No. 172.)

Sir,

THE question of the currency is at the present time an undoubted source of discontent in the Great Lebanon, and perhaps a contributory cause of the general Syrian unrest. The Syrian pound, issued by the Banque de Syrie et du Grand Liban at the fixed value of 20 francs paper, follows the vagaries of its French stepmother and is thoroughly unpopular with the whole community.

2. The convention signed between the bank and accredited representatives on the 23rd January, 1924, copy of which was forwarded to the Department of Overseas Trade by Mr. Satow in his despatch No. 50 O.T. of the 26th May, 1924, laid down in article 2 that this money is the sole legal tender in the States of Syria, the Lebanon and the Jebel Druse. All public and private business was to be done in this currency, and all prices fixed in it. But the money was already unpopular and partly ineffectual, and these measures were modified by a decree, published simultaneously and transmitted to the Department of Overseas Trade in despatch No. 6 O.T. of the 31st January last, which permitted the issue of commercial bills in foreign currencies if of more than five days' duration, the keeping of deposit and current accounts in foreign currencies, and even the payment of debts in gold, provided both parties were in agreement on the transaction.

3. But these palliatives, introduced after an agitation in business circles here, did not go far enough. The bank, which had taken in good metal in exchange for its now depreciated paper, was accused of simple robbery. Its one-sided monopoly was resented. In Aleppo, I believe, its issue of paper money never had any circulation worth mentioning, and in Damascus only a partial one. The law as to legal tender has never been taken seriously. In the Lebanon, where the Syrian pound and piastre are more current than elsewhere, many people, especially the peasants of the mountains and the Bekaa, have continued to disregard it to a great extent, in spite of the formal orders of the Government. Circulation, which was

about 10 million Syrian pounds towards the end of 1923, has now dropped, it is said, to a level of about 8 millions.

4. The rapid fall in the franc has increased this distrust extensively during the last year. Business men of any standing have ceased to use the local currency except for transactions of the moment. Whichever shop in Beirut a customer enters he will find the cloth, hardware or furniture he wishes to purchase marked privately at a gold value. The vendor works out the price of the day at the rate of exchange and asks the equivalent in Syrian currency. This system is almost universal. In commerce it is the only practical one to follow. The price of vegetables and meat in the market even rises as the exchange falls. The whole country is alive to the worthlessness as a stable token of the official currency, and any boatman or cabman will quote to his fare the exchange rate of the day of the Egyptian or English pound.

5. The strange thing is that this state of affairs holds good in a country happy in having no national debt, no external debt beyond its obligations towards the Ottoman Public Debt, and a large quantity of gold in free, if theoretically occult, circulation. In no way can Syria hope to profit, as another country might in foreign trade for example, by the depreciation of her currency.

6. The difficulties of budgeting under these conditions can be imagined. Each time the franc falls, there is dismay in the ranks of the petty traders, who have not yet learned the trick of dealing on a gold basis. Officials and clerks with fixed salaries are continually being given grounds for discontent with the diminishing purchasing power of their earnings.

7. The only people who appear to have benefited by the situation are the Banque de Syrie and some speculators. It seems likely too that French commerce has profited indirectly by the harnessing of the Syrian pound to the franc. The fixed ratio between the two, apart from the tendency of goods purchased in countries of low exchange to be fundamentally cheaper, encourages Syrian buyers to go to France for their stocks.

8. Against this gain should be set the loss in prestige which, in this country of a hard bargain and a quick perception of financial disadvantages, the low value of the currency suggests. France's supposed poverty is her chief defect in the eyes of many here, especially among the trading community of the Lebanon. If it is the law of the modern world that wealth induces respect, that rule holds certainly good in Syria, whose attention is continually turned on to the prosperity of Egypt, and to the administration which filled the flesh-pots of a land with which Syria has many ties.

9. A movement has consequently been set on foot for a new currency for Syria based on gold. France would do a great deal towards removing a sense of grievance if she acceded to it. Her excellent commercial position on the Syrian market might be maintained or even improved, in view of the probability of countries of high exchange purchasing goods in countries of low exchange, such as France at the moment is. The cost of the army of occupation and of the French administration, reckoned in French francs, would rise; but it is pointed out that in the matter of army supplies expenses would not be greatly increased, since cereals and meat, two of the chief commodities needed, are already bought on a gold basis.

10. The present currency is looked upon as having drained away a considerable part of the wealth of the country, and as still placing it under a perpetual disability. It is a constant reminder that the mandatory Power is not so strong on the exchequer side as alternative mandatory Powers might have been. If other conditions make it possible, a revision of the currency is one of the first steps which, after pacification, the French would be well advised to take.

I have, &c.  
NORMAN MAYER.

[E 8165/357/89]

No. 360.

Acting Consul-General Mayers to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 31.)

(No. 173.)

Sir,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 171 of the 14th December last I have the honour to report that there is a recrudescence of rebel activity in the country bordering on Hermon which lies between Rasheya and Hasbaya. The bands are again

in the vicinity of Hasbaya, where they are attacking the French. In view of the operations now proceeding in Damascus, this is only to be expected; but the menace to security in the country nearer Beirut, which appeared very real when Zayd Attrash made his first raid, is this time much further removed. If the Druses of the Lebanon were to be raised it was in that first unexpected sally.

2. A traveller who arrived from Hasbaya in the middle of last week describes the town as being abject in its misery. The return of the bands, who were then in the region of Khulweh-el-Kufair in considerable strength, was hourly expected, and the guns were busy both to the north and to the south. More than half the inhabitants had left. Practically all the houses had been completely looted. Pillage by the French colonial troops still goes on. The Senegalese and the North Africans do not hesitate to knock down and beat women who cross their path on their marauding expeditions through the town, and peasants who have experienced both say they had better treatment at the hands of the Druses. The victims seem to take their lot very quietly nevertheless.

3. Since the reassertion of French authority the Druses living in the region have fared badly. All who could move have, of course, fled with their families and their goods, whether they took part in the rebellion or not. A house of a peaceable Druse in Hasbaya was described to me. The owner was an old man who lived there with his wife and invalid daughter. The women had got away, but he had been left behind when the French came back. Thereupon his house had been fired, and his burnt body still lay in its ashes. This was said by some to have been the work of the Christians of Kaukaba seeking vengeance (see paragraph 2 of my despatch No. 150 of the 15th November, 1925), by others to have been done by the French. I mention the fact as an instance that there is no lack of reciprocity in deeds of violence.

4. The weather, which has been very stormy during the last few days, will favour the French, who at any rate can find warmth and shelter in the villages they occupy, rather than the rebels, at large in the snow and sleet of the higher mountains.

I have, &c.

NORMAN MAYER.

## CHAPTER V.—GENERAL.

[E 6502/362/65]

No. 361.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).*  
(No. 3485.)

My Lord,

I TOOK advantage of a visit of courtesy paid to me by the French Ambassador this afternoon to speak to his Excellency about the passage of Turkish troops through Syria. I reminded him of the extremely friendly assurances given to Mr. Phipps by M. Berthelot on the 1st June (your telegram No. 207 of that date), and by M. Léger on the 9th September, as reported by Mr. Phipps in a private letter. I said that I was now informed that the Turkish Government was seeking permission for the passage first of 600, and later of 6,000, men; that this gave me some concern, not that I thought that the Turks were contemplating an attack upon Irak, but because there was no excuse for such movements, and they could only be intended as a threat. I trusted that, if any troops were allowed to pass, it would be only in small numbers, and that the French Government would insist that with the arrival of each detachment an equal number should be brought away before a further detachment was allowed to pass.

M. de Fleuriau told me that, from the Quai d'Orsay print which reached him in the ordinary course, he could tell me that he had seen that some such demands had been made, and that the French Government had instructed their Embassy in Constantinople to make strong objections. He would report to M. Briand what I had said.

I then told his Excellency that I must speak to him about Damascus. He asked rather eagerly if I had any news, and said that he had been intending to put this question to me.

I read to him, with very slight omissions and alterations, the text of telegram No. 20 of the 21st October from Consul Smart. I said that I thought it my duty to bring this report to his notice. Some account of the incident might reach this country in private letters, and I thought it better to speak frankly to him about it at once.

M. de Fleuriau thanked me for giving him this information. He said that as one who had had some experience of the East and Far East, the things which he had read had produced a very bad impression upon his own mind, which had been confirmed and strengthened by the telegram which I had just read to him. So much, he added, in all these Eastern countries, depended upon personality.

I then ventured upon the observation that such information as came to me made me feel that the French Government ought to be very vigilant, and that it might well be that a serious situation would develop in Syria. I wondered what part the Soviet or Turkish Governments had in these troubles.

M. de Fleuriau seemed to think that the Turks had little influence upon the disturbances, though they were not displeased by them. He thought the activities of the Soviet Government more dangerous.

I am, &c.  
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

No. 362.

*The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 10.)*

(No. 419.)  
(Telegraphic.)

[By Bag.]

Paris, November 9, 1925.

FOREIGN Office despatch No. 3656 and letter from Air Ministry dated 30th October.

I mentioned this matter to M. Briand to-day, reminding him of what M. Herriot had said in January last about the Syrian frontier, and adding that, so far as the recent passage of Turkish troops on the railway is concerned, I understood that the French authorities had been taking the matter in hand. On this latter point M. Briand said it had been clearly laid down that no greater number of troops

would be allowed to pass eastward than that which was passing west; that the former class must not represent reinforcements, but only reliefs.

As regards the frontier, he had given instructions to the French de representatives that there was to be no question of giving up any of the terr. Syria. If any point ever arose which seemed to involve a change in the frontier he would certainly take no action without consulting you. He considered that our interests in that part of the world are so closely intertwined that independent action in such a matter would be a grave mistake. I said it was an open secret that the Turks cherished a hope of acquiring, in some way or another and at some time, control over the whole length of the Bagdad Railway. M. Briand said he had no intention whatever of parting with French control over that portion of the railway which runs through Syrian territory.

No. 363.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 11.)*

(No. 62.)  
(Telegraphic.)

Beirut, November 11, 1925.

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Train hitherto detained at Islahie has been allowed to proceed eastward. Another eastward-bound train will follow. Nothing more has passed westwards, although a thousand [? group omitted] are expected. Unwillingly am forced to conclude French incapable of keeping agreements. Seventh division is unofficially reported to be about to move eastward by road. Syrian situation: rebels occupying Hasbaya in the Hermon area."

(Repeated to Bagdad and Palestine.)

[E 6984/357/89]

No. 364.

*Mr. Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).*

(No. 3779.)  
My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 14, 1925.

THE latest reports which I have received from Syria are causing me grave concern, since they indicate a serious failure on the part of the French authorities to give effect to that policy of Anglo-French co-operation throughout the world which has been the object of our two Governments to secure.

2. On the 5th December, 1924, in my first conversation with M. Herriot after I assumed my present office, I observed to his Excellency that national friendship could not be confined only to the relations existing between the Governments in London and Paris, but must extend to the relations of our representatives in all parts of the world. M. Herriot cordially agreed, and as a result all French and British representatives abroad were instructed to maintain close and continuous collaboration with their respective British and French colleagues. I am satisfied that my instructions in this respect have been scrupulously observed by British officials and by no one more so than His Majesty's consul at Damascus; and I have reason to know that M. Briand desires that the similar instructions issued by M. Herriot should be observed with equal loyalty.

3. But what has happened as regards Anglo-French co-operation in Syria? I find that Mr. Smart, His Majesty's consul at Damascus, an admirable public servant, known to possess the strongest sympathy and goodwill towards France, who has handled a difficult situation with consummate skill, has been accused by high French officials of direct responsibility for provoking the recent troubles at Damascus by means of alarmist notices which he is alleged to have placarded in the town. These accusations are devoid of any foundation whatever. Notices based on definite notifications made to Mr. Smart by the delegation of the High Commissioner were affixed by him after the first bombardment in the waiting-room of the consulate only, with a view to the removal of British subjects out of the danger zones in case the bombardment of the town should be renewed—an eventuality which had been foreshadowed if the town should fail to comply with the conditions imposed on it by the French authorities. These notices were withdrawn as soon as the delegation

Smart that the bombardment would not take place. The false accusations Smart have nevertheless been given wide publicity in the Paris press, and word of denial has been issued by the French Government, who should be met with the real facts of the case. I must express my profound regret at this [E] on and my earnest hope that the French Government will take immediate steps to correct it. His Majesty's Government are anxious to avoid the necessity for making any announcement or taking any steps which could appear to reflect on a French official or encourage controversy between the newspapers of the two countries, but the French Government will understand that they cannot leave His Majesty's consul exposed without defence to such attacks when his action in a most anxious situation has merited their warm approval.

4. This is not the only matter in which the French authorities in Syria have seriously failed to carry out the policy of Anglo-French co-operation in accordance with the instructions of the French Government. That Government is well aware of the concern which His Majesty's Government feel as regards the passage of Turkish troops eastwards over the Syrian section of the Bagdad Railway. Earnest representations have repeatedly been made during the last few weeks on this subject both in Paris and in London; and according to the categorical assurances given to your Lordship by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 9th November, it had been clearly laid down by the French Government that no greater number of Turkish troops would be allowed to pass eastward than that which was passing west, i.e., that the former category of troops must represent not reinforcements but only reliefs. I now learn that the French authorities have allowed a Turkish troop train, hitherto detained at Islahie, to proceed eastwards, although no further Turkish troops have passed westward and that another eastward-bound train is to follow. I am at a loss for any explanation of an act so definitely at variance with the undertakings emphatically renewed by M. Briand only a few days since.

5. The present relations between the French and British Governments are happily so cordial that they can speak to each other with complete frankness about any difficulties or misunderstandings which may arise. I therefore believe that I am acting in accordance with M. Briand's wishes as well as my own inclination in bringing my anxieties at once to the notice of the French Government. I should fail in my duty were I not to call their attention frankly to the grave danger which threatens the relations between the two countries unless steps are taken forthwith to bring the actions of the French authorities in Syria into harmony with what I know to be the general policy of the French Government. I am firmly convinced that M. Briand is as anxious as I am to avoid any such risk at a time when the fullest confidence and co-operation is more than ever necessary for the execution of the great work of pacification in which we are engaged.

6. Your Lordship should read this despatch to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and leave a copy of it with his Excellency.

I am, &c.  
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[E 7143/357/89]

No. 365.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).  
(No. 3836.)  
My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 19, 1925.

THE French Ambassador called upon me this morning in anticipation of the visit of M. de Jouvenel this afternoon.

M. de Fleuriau recurred to the conversation which he had had with Sir William Tyrrell about affairs in Syria. He had reported what Sir William Tyrrell had said to Paris, and three days ago he had received instructions on the subject, but he had been prevented by indisposition from acting upon them earlier. M. Briand informed him that he fully shared my desire that our two countries should pursue a friendly and co-operative policy in every part of the world. He had no intention of failing in the obligations of friendship to Great Britain. Indeed, the Turkish Ambassador had shown the greatest suspicion of the intimate friendship between the French and British Governments which, he suggested, was causing the French Government to be unfaithful to the Angora engagements. M. Briand had replied that France would keep her engagements but that, even apart from her friendship with Great Britain,

she had special duties as mandatory to the League of Nations to prevent the mandated territory of Syria being used in any way for hostile preparations against another mandated territory. The Turkish Ambassador had explained that the troops which it was desired to pass eastward were not reinforcements but that the Turkish Government did not wish to bring back the men relieved by the route owing to the recent troubles in Kurdistan and the still prevalent unrest. The Turkish Government desired to establish Turkish soldiers in that district and were replacing Kurdish soldiers by Turks. The disbanded soldiers therefore returned to their homes and did not pass westward. On these assurances the 6,000 troops which the Turks had asked for had been allowed to pass.

I told M. de Fleuriau that I was completely puzzled by this communication, which did not seem to me consistent with the information I had just received from you in your telegram No. 443.

M. de Fleuriau attempted at first to prove that the two communications were consistent inasmuch as the eastward-bound troops were in fact not reinforcements but reliefs.

I remarked that that was the information given by the Turkish Ambassador, but I asked whether the French Government was in a position to verify it; and I spoke with great seriousness to the Ambassador of the necessity of maintaining and enforcing upon subordinates the friendly policy of the two Governments. I pointed out that by yesterday's decision of the House of Commons we had become guarantors of French security, that this result had been achieved with the approval of all parties and by an almost unanimous vote of the House of Commons; but that there was in certain quarters a great deal of suspicion of French policy, and that I attached the utmost importance to being able to show that such suspicion was groundless.

M. de Fleuriau then, speaking personally and without instructions, as he took pains to observe, said that General Sarrail had been out of control, that he had kept the French Government completely in the dark, that it was not pleasant for him to have to make even personally and in such an informal way this confession to me, but that he was sure that I should find no such cause to complain of the action of the new High Commissioner. The Ambassador then touched lightly on the position of Mr. Smart, and drew my attention to the statement made by M. Briand yesterday to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber.

I said that I had noted this statement with pleasure, that Consul Smart's action had the full approval of His Majesty's Government and that he was known for his sympathy with France. The Ambassador might have observed that several questions had already been put to me on the subject in the House of Commons, but I had postponed them all till next Wednesday in order that I might have received M. Briand's reply before answering them, as in defending a British official I was anxious not to appear to reflect upon a servant of the French Government.

The Ambassador then passed to the question of Mosul. He said that he attached great importance to the statement which I had made to him in conversation in Paris, that I regarded that question as primarily an issue between Turkey and the League and that in particular I should so regard any attack by Turkey on the territory assigned by the League to Irak. As this statement had been made in a private conversation he had not at first liked to make use of it, but Sir William Tyrrell had told him that he might regard it as an official expression of the view of the British Government. He had accordingly communicated it to M. Briand, who had assured him that the French Government had no intention of attempting to enforce any compromise that was disagreeable to this country, and would do its utmost within the limits imposed upon it to secure at the Council a solution acceptable to us.

I then developed more fully my views upon the importance of the treatment of the Mosul issue by the League. I pointed out how exactly parallel were the circumstances in which the League was constituted judge of the Mosul dispute with those which had made it judge of the Greco-Bulgarian frontier. In each case, the Council, having received an assurance from one of the parties that it would abide by the decision of the Council whatever it was, the Acting President had insisted upon obtaining from the other party a similar assurance before putting the report and resolution to the Council. The Council was, in fact, as M. Boncour had observed to me in Paris, building up a system of jurisprudence for the League out of these individual cases. If it allowed Greece or Bulgaria to go back on the assurance which each had given, what would remain of the authority of the League, and of what value would be the League in case of other frontier disputes, say, on the boundaries of Poland or Czechoslovakia, or even on the Rhine? It was in the light of the immense

of these decisions as precedents for the future action of the League in  
not be graver cases than I had spoken to my colleagues and made my report  
council in the Greco-Bulgarian question.

The Ambassador said he fully realised the importance of this view of the case.  
[F]in respect of Mosul it was strengthened by the additional fact that Irak was a  
mandated country under the guardianship of the League.

I replied that this added force to my argument, and that certainly if the Turks  
were to attack the boundary settled by the League we should at once appeal to the  
League, and I should ask what the Council proposed to do and what sanctions it  
intended to enforce, and I should watch their decision with the greatest interest, for  
the steps which they might take then would be the measure of the obligations to  
which Great Britain might have to conform if the frontiers of other nations became  
at some future time the subject of dispute.

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No. 366.

*Consul-General, Beirut, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 12.)*

(No. 75.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Beirut, December 12, 1925.*

FOLLOWING from liaison officer for Air Ministry:—

"Train situation as follows: Total of 29 officers and 6,087 men have  
passed eastwards and 103 officers and 4,025 men have passed westwards.

"Syrian situation as follows: French concentrating all efforts on clearing  
up Damascus situation, where ten battalions now concentrated. Many parts  
of Syria denuded of troops for this purpose, and trouble may be now expected  
elsewhere. Railway cut last night between Damascus and Rayak. High  
Commissioner has gone to Aleppo, where anti-French propaganda becoming  
very strong. Turkish influence suspected. Lebanon quiet."

(Repeated to Bagdad and Palestine. Sent to Foreign Office, No. 75.)

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No. 367.

*Consul, Damascus, to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 17.)*

(No. 38.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Damascus, December 17, 1925.*

FRENCH High Commissioner informs me that he is sending Colonel Mailles  
to Jerusalem to open discussions on frontier delimitation between British and French  
mandated territories. Mailles, who was on Turco-Syrian Frontier Commission, has  
been reported by His Majesty's consul at Aleppo as Anglophil.

(Sent to Bagdad, No. 30, and Jerusalem, No. 15.)